This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Lancaster Town Library.

PRESENTED BY

Miss E. B. Greene

No. 7752

252

W268d

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

GIFT OF

THE CLASS OF '03

Wm. F. Greene

DISCOURSES

ON THE

OFFICES AND CHARACTER

OF

JESUS CHRIST.

BY HENRY WARE, Jr.
MINISTER OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN BOSTON.

'Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent.'

SECOND EDITION.

BOSTON,
DAVID REED, 81 WASHINGTON STREET.

PRINTED BY I. R. BUTTS AND CO.
1826.

CWM

BT201
W31

~~I152~~

TO THE REV. FRANCIS PARKMAN.

DEAR SIR,

As we have been so intimately and happily united in our labors for the promotion of religion in our associated churches; I am unwilling to be separated from you in the present attempt to extend its truth and influence. I therefore join your name with my own, and beg you to regard it as a slight expression of the esteem and affection of

Your friend and brother,

H. WARE, JR.

That they may aid believers in rightly appreciating their relation to the Saviour, and cultivating the sentiments and habits which it requires, is the writer's highest wish and ardent prayer.

Boston, May, 1825.

CONTENTS.

DISCOURSE I.

Christ the Foundation 9

DISCOURSE II.

Jesus the Messiah 21

DISCOURSE III.

Sufficiency and Efficacy of Faith in the Messiah . 35

DISCOURSE IV.

Jesus the Mediator 41

DISCOURSE V.

Jesus the Saviour 57

DISCOURSE VI.

Jesus the High Priest 70

DISCOURSE VII.

The Atonement by Jesus Christ 81

DISCOURSE VIII.

Jesus the Intercessor 89

The caution which the apostle thus administers to the Corinthian church, has not ceased to be important; and if we would be saved from the folly and ruin of neglecting it, it will become us to consider diligently *of what, and in what sense*, Jesus Christ is the foundation. This will be the object of the present discourse.

1. Jesus is the foundation of *the Church*. It is built upon him as the chief corner stone. This figure is not uncommon with the writers of the New Testament. In more than one instance they speak of the Church, or the company of believers, as a Temple, each believer one of the stones of which it is formed, and Jesus himself, the foundation, or corner stone. Agreeably to this idea, Jesus is represented in our text as the only foundation on which the church can stand, and in which believers should trust.

The church is that society or collection of the good, who have been brought home to God and been fitted for heaven, through the instrumentality of the dispensations of grace upon earth. It is a permanent body, existing alike in all ages. It is one body, though of many members. It must then have some common head, and common bond of union; and that is Christ. The members are united in him as the branches in the vine, and draw nourishment and support from one stock. If there be any other head, bond of union, source of nourishment and strength, it ceases to be the Church; and those individual members who abide not in him, are like branches severed from the vine, 'cast forth and withered.' Without him, they can do nothing. They can find neither life, nor light, nor support, nor the power to bring forth fruit.

The believers at Corinth seem not sufficiently to have considered this; and hence the apostle rebukes them as carnal. Instead of being satisfied with the authority of Christ, they separated from him and from one another in an unwise contention concerning the superiority of favorite teachers—whom they thoughtlessly exalted to be their masters, although admonished that 'one only was their master.' The reprimand of the apostle is here recorded as a

warning to all who should afterwards believe. Yet by how many has it been unheeded! Every age has witnessed other men, and fallible men, set up at the head of the corner, instead of that elect and precious One whom God appointed. As the Samaritans erected a temple on mount Gerizim in opposition to that at Jerusalem, so the sects in christendom have often erected some authority in preference to that of Christ. There is still too much of this. 'I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,' is still a cry too frequently heard. Faith is yet established on the speculations of fallible men, and the salvation of the soul rested on the teaching of human wisdom.

This is an error frequently and pointedly censured by Jesus and his Apostles. It is virtually, though not professedly, a renunciation of his authority, a rejection of his rule, a rebellion against his government. The man who surrenders his judgment to the dictation of other men, instead of appealing to the written word of Christ's instruction; and the church, which fetters itself by articles drawn up in language which man's wisdom teaches, instead of walking in the wide liberty of the charter of God's truth; —have laid another foundation than that which is laid, and are obnoxious to heavy rebuke.

2. In the next place, Christ is the only foundation because *the christian religion rests on his authority.* He is its prime and only sufficient teacher. The religion is to be learned from him, and to his word the final appeal must be made. No representations of what it is, or of what it teaches, are to be trusted, except so far as they are perceived to be conformable to his own, as uttered in his life, and recorded by his evangelists, or illustrated by his apostles.

The wisdom of man is an uncertain and insufficient guide. For Christianity is not something to be discovered by us; but is a revelation from heaven, sent for our acceptance, concerning which we have nothing to do, but to study and receive it. It affords no scope for invention or discovery. We may not add to it, nor take from it. We may speculate concerning it, but may not affix our specu-

lations as a part of it. And if we receive the alterations or additions, which are found in the traditions of the church or the books of its teachers, we may be sure that we receive error. For the greatest corruption in doctrine and morals prevailed, when the teachers had hidden the Bible, and set up tradition and authority in its stead ; when they placed themselves in the seat of Jesus, and men obeyed them instead of him. In this way, the true light, which ought always to have been set like a city on a hill, was hidden as it were under a bushel, and an almost pagan darkness overshadowed the world—a darkness, visible and heavy—a darkness, that was 'felt'—which was scattered, only by uncovering the light of God's holy word, and restoring the forgotten ascendancy of Jesus Christ.

The teaching of Jesus must be regarded as the fountain of christian truth. The instructions of others, are but streams flowing from it ; some nearer the source, and some more distant from it ; but all likely to be more or less affected by the character of the channel which conveys them, and the soil through which they pass. Even the words of the apostles are not to be taken before those of Christ. For to them the spirit was given by measure, to him 'without measure.' The treasure in them was in 'earthen vessels,' and they 'knew but in part.' The spirit preserved them from injurious errors in communicating and recording the truth ; but still they are not to be put on a level with their infallible master, nor their epistles to be esteemed and admired beyond his discourses. They wrote for particular churches, on special occasions, oftentimes on subjects of temporary interest and questions of controversy, now settled and forgotten ; and this it is, which makes some passages in their writings so hard to be understood. Jesus, on the other hand, though adapting himself to present circumstances, yet had in general a wider reference to all who should in any age believe on him. He was laying the foundation of a temple for all people, while the disciples were building upon it for particular communities. Hence he is more easily and generally understood, and his teaching is more universally applicable. Not that the epis-

The official title, *Christ*, did not become a proper name until after the resurrection. For until then the great undecided question among his countrymen was, whether he were truly the Christ or not. It was the belief that he was so, which distinguished his disciples from the other Jews, and they accordingly called him Jesus, the Christ—the Messiah—the Anointed; from which use it readily passed into a name, as in our text, and throughout the Epistles.

The primary importance of this article of faith, thus demonstrated by its becoming inseparably associated with the very name of the Saviour, points it out to us as the fundamental article of the christian's belief. All the other truths and doctrines of the christian system grow out of this and rest upon it. Upon this depends the authority of the master, and the allegiance of the disciples. While this stands, these remain. If this be removed, they fall.

A slight glance at the history of the New Testament confirms this position. The Messiah had been predicted by many of the prophets, and his coming was anxiously awaited by the Jewish people. At the time of our Lord's appearance the expectation had become general and impatient. Men thronged around him, 'musing in their hearts whether this were the Christ or not.' The chief people sent messengers to inquire, and they put the question to himself: 'Tell us plainly, art thou the Christ.' This was the great controversy between the believers and the Jews. Upon the decision of this, depended the whole question of his authority and claims. Those who admitted it, followed and obeyed him. Those who denied it, crucified and rejected him. Throughout the book of the Acts, therefore, we find that it is this which was the burden of the Apostles' preaching. 'God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ.' 'Proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.' 'This Jesus, whom I preach to you, is the Christ.' To establish this, was the object which they had at heart. To establish this, they labored, and reasoned, and entreated. For they knew that when this should be granted, all else would follow of course. When they should have persuaded men to acknowledge

him as the Messiah, they knew that his instructions must be received as the message of God, and his religion stand and prevail by its divine light and power. Consequently we find drawn up by them no authoritative list of essential articles, no precise and dogmatical creeds, 'which, except a man keep whole and undefiled, he shall without doubt perish everlastingly.'* No; these were the inventions of weaker men in more ignorant times, who cared more for their own and less for their master's influence. The Apostles were satisfied to proclaim *this* as the one essential article, the distinguishing principle of the Christian, on the reception of which a man should be numbered among the believers. They preached to men JESUS THE CHRIST. They declared what he had done and taught, and left them to derive his system from his own life and instructions, labours and sacrifices—aiding them, to be sure, by their reasonings and illustrations; but at the same time declaring, 'we have no dominion over your faith.' Would to God, that all teachers had been as modest and consistent! Would to God, that all Christians would understand and abide by the liberty thus allowed them—acknowledging no foundation but this, Jesus the Christ, and taking heed 'how they build thereon.'

4. We are likewise to regard Jesus Christ as the foundation, because he is *the source of all satisfactory religious knowledge.*

Jesus called himself, 'the Light of the world;' and he is truly the fountain and depository of whatever light we possess on the great subject of religion. There is to us, strictly and properly speaking, no other. We know nothing on the subject, clearly and certainly, but what we learn from him, or have been enabled to attain in consequence of what he has taught us. It is true that we gather something of the existence, attributes, and providence of God from the works of nature; but how little should we be able to do it, without the aid of revelation? We find the great principles of morality and accountableness in 'the law written

* The language of the *Athanasian Creed.*

on our hearts;' but it is our previous acquaintance with the christian revelation, which enables us to see them so distinctly there, and they have been very obscurely discerned by those who have not the benefit of this aid. We might learn something also from the great human lights, which have adorned and instructed the world in all ages; but not enough, amidst their own vague and contradictory notions, to be a sure and satisfactory guide. For it is certain, that however great the wisdom of the world may have been, still 'the world by wisdom knew not God.'

What man might be capable of learning under any circumstances, from his own unassisted inquiry, it were unprofitable to discuss. All history declares the plain and incontrovertible fact, that by his own unassisted inquiry he has learned comparatively nothing. The certainty and definiteness of the very first principles, he owes to the instruction of Jesus; and if he have added any thing by his own efforts, it is because he has built upon this foundation, and been guided by this light. Who knows any thing of God, 'but the Son, and he to whom the Son has revealed him?' Who understands any thing of the purposes of the divine will, but they who have received it from Jesus? Look over the history of the world, Brethren; in former and in present times, in christian and in pagan lands:—where do you find religious knowledge, and from what fountains does it flow? Do you not trace all its streams to Nazareth? Do you not find every beam emanating from the Star of Bethlehem? And is not every region dark and unwatered, which these do not visit? Look also to your own minds, and consider whether you possess any valuable knowledge concerning God, any certain and satisfactory truth, any sustaining and peace-giving acquaintance with things invisible and future, which is not derived from the christian doctrine. And will you not say, then, with earnest faith, 'Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'

5. Again, we are to regard Jesus Christ as the foundation of *true morality;* as not only revealing the true system of religious faith, and the character and purposes of God;

but as bearing an anthorized communication concerning right and wrong, and establishing the laws of virtue.

It is a distinction of his religious system, that it is eminently a system of morals, resting on authority. There have been other moral systems, but they have rested on speculation, and were therefore imperfect both in theory and in practice. There have been other religious systems, but they have been separated from morality, and have produced the monstrous absurdity of open and undisguised alliance between religion and vice. Religion among the pagan nations has been engaged in little else than expedients to appease capricious divinities, and devices for reconciling the consciences of men to their sins, and keeping the state in order by mystery and spectacle. Jesus builds his whole system on opposite principles, and makes a thorough, undeviating, searching morality, its essential and vital spirit, without which piety is but hypocrisy, and worship but blasphemy.

The character of his morality, also, differs from that which has been taught by the wise, and prevailed in the customs of the world. They have appealed to the sensitive sentiment of honor, and endeavored to make men virtuous from selfishness and pride. They have cultivated a spurious virtue, upon the soil of interest, policy and expediency. They have set value on the superficial and showy, rather than the deep and real. They have sometimes placed virtue in passion, and sometimes in insensibility, and sometimes in the useless and wasteful seclusion of indolent contemplation. The moral principle of the world has thus been always unfixed and wavering; it has fluctuated with fashion and circumstances, and changed as humor or accident might dictate. For the guides of the world have erected their systems on false theories, and on wrong and inadequate motives; or if they had not done so, yet they could settle nothing and control no one, for they had no authority. But Jesus speaks with authority—the authority of a commissioned messenger from the moral Governor and Judge of men. He communicates, from the instructions of Infinite Rectitude, the knowledge

of duty, the boundaries of right and wrong, the definitions and motives of virtue, the promises and threats of retribution.

The nature and requisitions of true morality are thus established by one who has a right to establish them, and from whose word there can lie no appeal. Our own feelings, passions, and whims, by which we are so ready to be ruled, must give up the reins to his law. To that must be yielded the decision in all questions of conduct and duty. If God had not spoken, we might have inquired, what will be convenient or pleasant, what will gratify our passions, or promote our present interests; but now the inquiry must be, 'what doth the Lord our God require of us?' what is the language of Christ? what is the spirit of his religion? how are we instructed by his example? The conduct which cannot bear the scrutiny of such questions, is wrong. The morality which is not conformable to this standard, is unsound and false. No matter if it be agreeable to some theoretical rule of abstract right, or some high toned principle of honour, or some proud and unswerving law which we have laid down to ourselves. No matter if it conform to some strong feeling within, which claims to be the voice of God, or to some urgent circumstances of expediency, which, we persuade ourselves, are the monitions of his providence. Still if it contradict the pure and holy rule of Christ; if it be inconsistent with the benevolent and devout spirit of his gospel; it is fundamentally and utterly to be condemned; it is immoral and bad. For true morality stands only in the instructions of him who is the way, the truth, and the life, and no other foundation can man lay.

6. We may say once more, Christ is the only foundation of the *believer's hope*. It is from him and his gospel, that we learn those truths concerning the mercy and placability of God, which give hope of pardon on repentance, and of acceptance in our imperfect attempts to please him; —from him alone, also, that we derive sufficient assurance of a future life, and an existence of eternal purity and peace. Upon these points the understanding might speculate, and sometimes plausibly conjecture; but what could

it ever *know?* What *did* it ever KNOW in the uninstructed lands of heathenism? The whole history of the world teaches us, that on these points, so interesting to man's heart, so essential to man's happiness, there has been nothing but superstition and dim conjecture, except where the gospel has been revealed. It is the message of Jesus Christ, which has taught the grace of Almighty God; which has proclaimed his long suffering and compassion; which has encouraged sinners to repent and return by invitations of forgiving love; which has declared the kind allowance of our Father for unavoidable imperfection, and thus given courage to human weakness. It is this only, which proclaims to a world lying in wickedness, that 'God hath not appointed it to wrath, but to obtain salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ;' and 'hath sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.' Man—doubting, frail, tempted, fearful—hears the voice of love, and looks up in the humble assurance of faith. No longer an alien, but a son, he seizes the outstretched hand of his blessed Lord, and goes on his way rejoicing.

There is another hope which he founds on the same rock—the hope of a coming immortality. Once he was in bondage through the fear of death. But now, his Saviour hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. The bitterness of death is past. There is light within the tomb. There is a visible region of glory beyond it. And the child of earth, who once shuddered and was wretched in the dread of everlasting extinction, is now able to smile upon the dreary pathway to the grave, and triumph over the terrors of corruption.

What an inestimable privilege is this! With his open bible before him, and the image of his gracious Saviour in his mind, how does the conscience stricken penitent rejoice amid his tears, in the hope of offered pardon! How does the humble and self-distrusting believer, who stands trembling and abashed in the presence of infinite purity—find comfort in the encouraging accents of Christ's soothing voice, and the hope of acceptance at the throne of grace.

How does the reasoning and dying offspring of the dust—to whom existence, and friendship, and virtue are dear—rejoice with holy gratitude in the hope, that his existence shall be renewed, and his desires satisfied, in heaven. Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift—this glorious hope, which, in every season of trial and every stormy strait of sorrow and fear, is 'an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.'

It is not necessary to go farther than this. We perceive that the foundation of the christian church, and of all true religion in the world; and of individual faith, knowledge, virtue, and hope; is laid in Jesus Christ. All our religious light, security, and peace rest upon this rock. Other we have none, and can have none. Let us leave this, and where shall we go? who will teach us the words of eternal life? who instruct us in the things which pertain to our everlasting peace? who guide us to the Father of love, and open to us the gate of heaven? Every other guide is uncertain, every other path is dark. Men have followed them, and gone astray; have walked in them, and stumbled; have sought rest in them, and found none. There is none other commissioned from heaven, but the son of the virgin. 'There is no name given among men whereby we can be saved, but that of Jesus Christ.'

DISCOURSE II.

JESUS THE MESSIAH.

MATTHEW xvi. 15, 16.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? and Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

THE question which our Lord here proposes to his disciples, which agitated with intense interest the whole Jewish nation during his ministry, has lost none of its interest or importance in the lapse of ages. It was, and is, the question upon which rests the decision of his claims to the obedience and gratitude of mankind. It is a question, too, which has received different answers, even from his own disciples in his own church, as it did from his countrymen while he lived. The passion for speculation, and the fondness for opinion, have found exercise even on this subject, and have thrown perplexity and debate on what is in itself plain and simple, and has been most clearly decided, in the only important particular, by the express authority of Scripture. To the Scriptures then we have recourse; and it is truly matter of gratitude, that a distinct reply to the inquiry is there recorded, which satisfied our Lord, and which consequently ought to satisfy us. If it was sufficient for Peter to know and acknowledge him as THE MESSIAH, it must also be sufficient for us. No man may demand or desire a more full and satisfactory reply, than that which drew upon the Apostle the memorable blessing. No man may doubt, that a similar blessing awaits all, who shall make the same profession with equal earnestness, faith and devotion, and carry

it out to the same practical consequences. In order to thi we must understand what such a profession implies; wh is intended by his being 'the Christ, the Son of God;' an what is the value of faith in him as such. To illustrat these objects is the purpose of the present discourse.

It is to be remarked, first of all, that the titles given t our Lord in the text, are unquestionably synonymous, an are used to indicate the same office. The ancient Jew familiarly employed the phrase Son of God as one of th names of the Christ, or Messiah. They used them bot promiscuously, to denote that great prince and delivere whom they also styled King of Israel and Son of Davi and whom they were expecting to fulfil the prophecie That the titles are thus equivalent to each other, is re dered evident by many passages in the New Testamen Thus in the beginning of our Lord's ministry, Andre came and told Peter, 'We have found the *Messiah* Philip said to Nathaniel, 'We have found him of who Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.' And Na thaniel cried out to Jesus, 'Thou art the *Son of God*, tho art the King of Israel.' It is obvious that each of them using different language, intended to express the same thin —that this was the expected Messiah. Again; when th elders and scribes demanded of Jesus if he were *the Chris* he replied indirectly, 'Hereafter shall the Son of man s on the right hand of the power of God.' They immediat ly exclaimed, 'Art thou then the *Son of God?*' In th case nothing can be plainer than that the two phrases are the same import. There is also a passage in the first epi tle of John, in which their equivalency 'is stated with th precision of a syllogism.'*

'Whosoever believeth *that Jesus is the Christ*, is bo of God.'

'Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world.'

'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that b lieveth *that Jesus is the Son of God.*'

'It is thus plain, that, according to the usage of the Jewis

* Gen. Repository, vol. ii. p. 252, note.

people, adopted and sanctioned by Jesus and the Apostles, the title *Son of God* has precisely the same significance with that of *Messiah*.* As if to intimate this, the evangelists are wont to place them together; so that we read in numerous passages, 'the Christ, the son of God,' evidently put in apposition, as interpreters of each other.

The term, *Messiah*, or *Christ*, is the special, peculiar, distinguishing title accorded to Jesus. Its original signification is *the Anointed;* and it embraces whatever office or duty it was the purpose of his mission to perform. In a word, it is his official designation; and its importance and completeness may be estimated by remarking, that it was by this title he was predicted, expected, announced, received, acknowledged, and persecuted, preached to the nations, and believed on in the world. From the days of the prophets who foretold his appearing, to the song of the angels at his nativity, and the establishment of his kingdom amongst the gentiles, this is his chosen title; and by this it is declared that 'the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.'

Under this title his coming was *predicted*. When Daniel spake of him, he called him 'Messiah the Prince;' and Isaiah alluded to the name when he said, 'Jehovah hath *anointed* me to preach glad tidings.'

Under this title his advent was anxiously *expected*. The Jews waited long for their promised deliverer and king, and the name by which they knew him was the Messiah. When the Baptist came, they earnestly asked, if he were the Christ; and they pressed in crowds around the path of Jesus with the same inquiry. Even the Samaritans had this expecta-

* 'To be the *Son of God*, and to be *the Christ*, are but different expressions of the same thing.' 'It is the very same thing to believe *that Jesus is the Christ*, and that *Jesus is the Son of God;* express it how you please. This alone is the faith, which can regenerate a man, and put a divine spirit into him; that is, make him a conqueror over the world, as Jesus was.' *Dr. Patrick, Bp. of Ely*, as quoted by Locke in the Postscript to his First Vindication.

On the whole subject of faith in Jesus as the Christ, I refer the reader very earnestly to that invaluable treatise of Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures*

tion; so that the woman at Sichar said, 'I know that whe the Messiah cometh, who is called Christ, he will tell u all things.'

Under this title he was *announced* by the angels at Beth lehem, 'unto you is born this day a Savior, who is Chris the Lord.'

Under this title he was *received and acknowledged*. Th twelve followed him, because they had 'found the Mes siah.' Peter in our text and elsewhere, Martha at th grave of Lazarus, and the man blind from his birth, con fessed and honored him as the predicted Messiah. A such the multitudes waited on him, and 'would take hin by force to make him king,' and welcomed him with ho sannas to the holy city.

As the Messiah he became subject to *persecution*. Th authorities of the land decreed, 'that if any man should con fess him to be the Christ, he should be put out of the syna gogue.' They accused him of blasphemy before their ow council, because he claimed to be the Son of God, that i the Messiah; and before the Roman magistrate they ar raigned him for treason, in saying 'that he himself is Chris a king.' As such, the soldiers mocked him with a crow and sceptre, and the brutal multitude at the foot of the cros insulted his suffering with the cry, 'If thou be the Christ save thyself; come down from the cross, and we will be lieve.'

It was as the Messiah, likewise, that he was *preached* t the nations and *believed* on in the world. Wherever th apostles went with the message of heaven, this was the bur den of their preaching, 'reasoning out of the scriptures an proving that Jesus is the Christ.' To this when the peopl consented, they were baptized and acknowledged as disci ples; and on this truth churches were gathered and found ed. The disciples were so familiarly known from this lead ing article of their faith, that the name of *Christians* wa given them at Antioch, and has adhered to them to the pre sent time.

Thus it appears that the title generally used in the Scrip tures, to designate the peculiar character and essential offic

of Jesus, is that of the Messiah. We proceed to inquire concerning the nature and objects of the office thus designated.

It is a remarkable feature in God's moral government of the world, that it is constituted of successive dispensations, each more perfect than the preceding, by which increasing knowledge and more perfect institutions have been given to men, 'as they were able to bear them.' In the early communications of God, we find frequent intimations of a purpose to make a final and complete revelation, and to establish on earth, as the greatest boon of divine benevolence, a permanent dispensation of truth and grace;—beneath which a purer knowledge of God should prevail, the dominion of evil should be shaken, and order, peace and happiness hold universal sway. To introduce this state of things, was the duty assigned to the Messiah. For this purpose he was commissioned and sent forth. And whatever might be necessary for the accomplishment of this great moral design, forms part of his commission, and is comprised in the objects of his office.

To this end, as the very title by which he is known, indicates, he was set apart and consecrated. The *anointing* was a solemn form of consecration, by which the priests and kings, and sometimes the prophets,* were separated to their respective services among the chosen people. It was the most significant act in an august and imposing ceremony of inauguration. It was the sacred sign of devotion to the appointed office or work; and came at last to stand for the thing signified, in cases where the sign itself had not been used. Thus Cyrus is called the *anointed*, when commissioned for the overthrow of Babylon, and the restoration of the Jews; and the patriarchs and even the whole people of Israel are so named,† because separated from the rest of mankind for the accomplishment of peculiar purposes in the moral government of the world. In conformity with this usage, the holiest and chief messenger of God to man,

* See 1 Kings xix. 16. † Psalm cv. 15; Hab. iii. 13.

appointed to effect the most important changes and intr
duce the perfect dispensation; to take place, in the goverr
ment of the church, of all the priests and kings and pr
phets, who had under the former economy been its medi
tors, instructors, and rulers;—is for this cause style
emphatically *the anointed;* 'above his fellows,' says th
Scripture, because consecrated to a duty and dignity wi
which none other can compare; 'with the holy spirit an
with power,' because it was not for temporal and earthl
but for spiritual and eternal purposes.

We may, therefore, without indulging a fanciful analog
consider the Messiah as uniting in his own character all th
sacred offices of the ancient church, to which the oil
consecration was applied; and use them for the illustratic
of his character. This we may the rather do, because eac
title is freely accorded to him in the sacred writings.

The office of the Prophets was to instruct, to teach,
admonish, and to foretell future events. They were th
guardians of the public religion and morals, appointed
watch against corruption and sin, and to proclaim the warn
ings and judgments of heaven against infidelity and crim
It was not an hereditary office, but one of special appoin
ment, at least in its higher departments, to which expre
inspiration was necessary, and to which miraculous powe
were often added. This office, unquestionably, and in i
highest character, was comprehended in that of the Me
siah. In this character Moses is supposed to have spoke
of him: 'A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up
you from among your brethren, like unto me.' In this ch
racter the people expected him: 'Art thou that Prophet
was their inquiry; and when they accompanied him wi
hosannas to Jerusalem, 'This is Jesus,' said they, 'the Pr
phet of Galilee.' So his disciples described him, 'a Pr
phet mighty in word and deed.' So he called himsel
when he said, 'It cannot be that a Prophet should peris
out of Jerusalem.' And such he proved himself by th
works of supernatural power which attested his divine au
thority; by the holy instructions which flowed from his lip
surpassing all the moral wisdom of man; by the fidelity

his earnest and affectionate warnings, his pathetic expostulations, his powerful rebukes, his authoritative denunciations, such as no other man ever uttered—before which the proud and hardened quailed as he spake, the ministers of justice were driven back, and the prejudiced and powerful silenced; and by his many predictions concerning the future,—which the world has shuddered to see accomplished, and which even our eyes behold in a course of fulfilment.

The office of Priest is also supposed to be comprehended in the Messiahship of Jesus. It is observable, however, that this title is never given him in the New Testament, excepting in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and there it is in a peculiar relation and for peculiar purposes, which cannot be considered in the present connexion. The priesthood amongst the Jews was an hereditary office, confined to the family of Levi. It was an office separated from the world, consecrated to religious duties, devoted to the service of the temple, and especially engaged in the various ceremonies of an extensive ritual, and the offerings and incense of the altar. It is plain, therefore, that although Jesus was literally a Prophet, he could not have been literally a Priest; because he was of Judah, not of Levi, and was not in any sense attached to the temple, or occupied in its service. But in as far as he was separated from the world, and set apart to the promotion of religion, and lived wholly in a state of consecration to God; so far he might be regarded as possessing the sacred character of the priesthood; just as his disciples, for similar reasons, are called, 'kings and priests unto God,' and 'a royal priesthood.' So far, also, as his sufferings in our behalf operate as a means of leading us to repentance and holiness, and of effecting that forgiveness of sin, which it was the office of the Jewish high priest to announce on the annual day of propitiation; so far Jesus may be regarded as the 'high priest of our profession.'

The office of the Messiah may be in part also explained by that of King. The kings of Israel are familiarly known in the Old Testament as 'the Lord's anointed;' and as the Messiah was to spring from their race, and sit on the throne of his father David, and their government was to be on his

shoulder; so he was to be accounted King, no less than Prophet. It may be remarked, indeed, that it was peculiarly and eminently as King, that the prophets had spoken of him, and his countrymen expected him. 'King of Israel,' was one title equivalent to 'Messiah;' and '*Kingdom* of heaven,' was the phrase that expressed the state of the church beneath his influence. When 'God anointed him with the holy spirit and with power,' it was to be Prince over his spiritual kingdom among men. The people were looking for a temporal prince, who should literally accomplish the words of the promise, and 'sit on the throne of his father David;' and therefore it was, that they sought 'to take him by force and make him King.' He was on this pretence arraigned before the Roman authority, as one who made himself King in opposition to the Emperor. And therefore when Pilate asked him, if he were a King, he denied it not; but only said in explanation, 'my Kingdom is not of this world.' Peter accordingly declares him 'a Prince and Savior;' and Paul speaks of the period when, having accomplished his royal labors, and 'put down all rule, authority, and power,' he shall 'deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father.'

All this implies that the office of Messiah embraces that of King, and that he is, in the language of Daniel, 'Messiah the Prince.' To him is committed the dominion over the moral provinces, which form the church of God. He is made supreme in all concerns of religion and truth, of conscience and duty. The command is given to him over the heart and life, the opinions, the character, and the destination of the intelligent children of earth. This is the most splendid and extensive kingdom ever set up among men; an empire, to which the magnificence and power of all the empires that have flourished in the past ages of time, are not to be compared, and to which all the concerns of all the states of the world are to be finally made subservient. Already is this in part effected. Already does his peaceful and spiritual authority sway the minds of men beyond the power of human law, and the authority of human custom. Already are the manners of the nations and the policy of

princes modified and guided by his superior influence. But he has not yet taken to himself all his power. As knowledge and light advance, the minds of men shall be yet more completely subjected to him; all hearts shall bow before him, and 'every tongue confess him to be Lord.' Human power shall be controlled by his rule, human laws be limited by his precepts, and all the institutions of earth be moulded in conformity with his spirit. God shall lift the arm of his providence over the nations, 'and overturn, and overturn, and overturn,' till 'the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.'

Such is a general description of the work which the Messiah was commissioned to perform, and of the effects which his ministrations were to produce. He was to make the final revelation of God's will; to establish a church which, as a spiritual empire beneath his authority, should perpetuate the knowledge and influence of religious truth; to spread light and happiness and peace by means of his institutions; to free men from the bondage of superstition, the degradation of vice, and the terrors of death; in a word, to set up the dominion of God's holy and parental government, and prepare men for heaven by bringing them on earth to the love and practice of those holy graces which form the bliss of the good hereafter. 'To this end he was born and to this end he came into the world, that he might bear witness to the truth;'—the truth, which 'makes free' from corruption and sin, and 'sanctifies' the soul.

Three remarks follow from our subject,

1. It is evident from what has been said, that the character in which our Lord appears, and in which he claims to be received and honored, is an *official character* simply. He comes to the world invested with a certain office, whose main duties have been mentioned, and is an object of attention and reverence as holding that office. It is *the dignity of the commission*, which is evidently referred to in all these representations. They plainly have no allusion to the nature of his person, or the rank of his being, or his original station of existence. They suggest no subtle discussions

concerning his essence and attributes. They are satisfied with pointing him out to us as one ordained to accomplish the most beneficent purposes of heaven, and for this reason demanding the faith and obedience of man.

Let us, then, be satisfied with knowing and holding this; for it is all which the Scriptures have made essential on the point, or of which they seem anxious to persuade us. It has happened indeed, that men have ever been solicitous to ascertain something further, and have persuaded themselves that a very positive decision is necessary on points relating, not only to the authority, but to the nature of Jesus. Perhaps it is not to be expected that we should be free from all solicitude on this subject. But whatever our solicitude may be, it should never blind us to the fact, that it is the receiving of Jesus *in the offices and relations* to which the Father has appointed him, which the Scriptures make the essential thing; and no decision of ours on more intricate and curious questions can affect our christian claim, if they do not affect our faith and obedience on this great point. If we truly hold this, all our knowledge on other questions could add nothing to our conviction of the certainty and obligation of his truth, or to the support and comfort of our faith. Because, in any case, he that receives him, receives the Father who sent him, and he that rejects him, rejects the Father. His doctrines and his promises, his precepts and his threatenings, have divine authority; and in no case could they have more. His life has accomplished all, which it was in any case designed to accomplish, and his death has all the efficacy, which it pleased God to appoint it to have. To what purpose then our anxiety to ascertain the mystery of his nature? Why fancy it essential to understand the secret of his being? When we receive Jesus as the Messiah, we KNOW that we receive him as we are commanded to receive him. It is the good profession of Peter and of Martha; it drew the express commendation of their Lord; it is that for which the Apostles argued, and on which the early churches were founded; and why should we suffer ourselves to be perplexed by the contentions and mysteries of later ages, when

we may find rest in that simple doctrine, which gladdened the hearts of the first disciples, and secured the unity of the primitive body?

2. For the same reasons, the profession of this faith by others should be sufficient ground of accounting them christians and admitting them to fellowship. So the Apostles thought and practised, and we have no right to depart from their example. Indeed if we do not stop here, it is difficult to say where we may stop. If we may add *one* to the article, which they have declared essential to the christian name and fellowship, how many may we not add? We should learn a caution from the history of the church; for this proneness to increase the catalogue of fundamental truths, has been a most fruitful source of confusion and misery. Every generation and every separate body has some peculiar mode of viewing religious truth, and some favorite doctrine of its own, which it soon magnifies into a matter of essential importance, and expects to find in all who profess to be Christians. It is forthwith added to the list of fundamentals, and made part of the standard to which all must conform. This conformity to a various and many colored system has been the attempt of all ages. To secure it, the peace of the church has been sacrificed, the rights of conscience and man trampled upon, and oppressions exercised in the name of Christ, which might disgrace the most savage tyranny that has ever warred against human peace. And all to what purpose? To secure a uniformity of belief in a multiplicity of articles; a thing which never has been, and which, it is time for us to know, never can be effected, while God is pleased to allow to men liberty of conscience; and to coerce conscience is a crime, which always has been, and ever must be, attended with misery. But leave the conscience free, and set up no faith beyond that which Jesus demanded and Peter professed, then the divisions of christendom might end, and 'the broken churches be healed.' That uniformity, which has been hitherto sought for by compulsion and fire, will spring up spontaneously as soon as believers shall think it sufficient to honor a common master in his favorite and distinctive office.

Undoubtedly other articles belong to the christian system, and he who has received this, will learn them of his Master. What is to be insisted upon is, that we have no right to dictate on the subject, nor to reject any one who holds this, on the ground that he has understood some of his Lord's instructions in a different sense from our understanding of them. 'By taking Jesus to be the Messiah, he is made a subject of his kingdom; that is, a Christian. To say that an explicit knowledge of, and actual obedience to, all the laws of his kingdom, is what is required to make him a subject; is what was never said of any other kingdom. A man must be a subject, before he is bound to obey;'* and he is bound to obey the Lord of the kingdom, and not his fellow subjects. 'He stands or falls to his own master.' How shall we dare to exclude any one from the title and privileges of his reign, because he will not substitute some other for the simple profession of Peter? How shall we dare to say, you shall not pass over the Jordan of life, because you cannot utter the complicated Shibboleth that we have framed?

3. In the last place, those who receive Jesus as the Messiah, acknowledge him to be their teacher and supreme guide in religion and duty, from whose authority there lies no appeal. 'All things,' he says, 'are committed to me by my Father;' 'neither came I of myself, but he sent me.' He is presented to the attention of men, not as one whom they would do wisely to accept, but whom also they are at liberty to refuse. For such is the commission he bears, that they cannot refuse him, without rejecting the Father who sent him. 'He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father.' In regard to other teachers, it is optional with us to learn of them or not. We may become their disciples if we please; but there is no obligation to become so. We may read their volumes, if we please; but, if we please, we may neglect them. But not so in regard to God's anointed. Such are his pretensions, concerning whom a voice came from heaven, 'This is my

* See Locke's Second Vindication, Works, fol. ii, 625. The form of the sentence is a little varied to suit it to the connexion.

beloved son, HEAR HIM;' that if we turn to him a deaf and prejudiced ear, it is at the peril of our souls. It is in a manner the essence of his office, that it has clothed him with a divine right over us. Whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear, that right exists, and his message is the message of God. He is our master, and guide, and king, and we cannot escape the obligation to follow his instructions and obey his laws. There must be no interference with his authority, no hesitation in our allegiance, no partial compliance with his requisitions. But at all times, in all places, in all concerns; in the cares of life, and in the purposes of the heart; in the duties of the world, and in the preparation for death; his doctrine must be our supreme law, and his precepts our only path.

Let us be persuaded, my dear brethren, to know and to feel this. Let the impression sink deeply in our hearts, that the moral sway of Christ extends, without exception, to all we are, and purpose, and do, and hope. Let us feel—and oh that we might act upon the feeling—that in him we have a friend, sent to us from God, that he may lead us to heaven. As such let us acknowledge and welcome him. The anthems of angels announce his nativity; the voice of God bears witness at his baptism; the powers of nature wait upon him and obey him while he lives, they are shaken and convulsed when he dies; the grave refuses to retain him, and his resurrection declares him to be the Son of God with power. He sends forth his light and truth, and the moral darkness of the world is dissipated. The temples of superstition fall, the halls of false philosophy are deserted, the humble and neglected are elevated to dignity and hope, the troubled are made acquainted with peace, the contrite are forgiven, and the dying smile with hope. 'Old things are passed away, and behold all is become new.' Happy are they, who have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to feel, what the grace of God has thus accomplished for the children of men! Happy they, who are partakers of this moral regeneration! who know, from personal experience, the worth of these mes-

sages of life, and the joy and peace they impart to the believing. But miserable they, who have no sense of the greatest work which has been wrought upon our world; who have no share in that joy which tunes the voices of heaven, and changes the face of earth. Unhappy men! who see it all, and yet perceive it not; who hear it all, and yet understand it not; who have thus shut themselves out from the most elevated happiness of earth, and the sublimest, the only satisfying prospects, which are offered to the human soul. 'Oh, that they were wise; that they would understand this; that they would consider their latter end!'

DISCOURSE III.

SUFFICIENCY AND EFFICACY OF FAITH IN THE MESSIAH.

1 John v. 5.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.

To receive Jesus as the Son of God, the appointed Messiah, is, we have already seen, to receive him in the character in which he is especially revealed, and with the profession which he himself declared sufficient. It is the primary and fundamental article of the system, in which, however they may otherwise differ, all believers are agreed, and which all may find sufficient who will receive it in the true spirit. For small and simple as it may appear, it comprises 'the wisdom of God and the power of God,' and has that efficacy which shall 'overcome the world.'

It is sometimes however, thought inconceivable, that belief in a proposition apparently so inadequate should produce such vast effects. When we hear with what energy the gospel operates, and what extensive effects it is designed to produce; we fancy there must be some extensive, complicated, wonderful machinery; and with a ready feeling of incredulity we object, that so simple a statement of the christian faith must be wholly feeble and inefficient.

To this objection, which indeed may seem plausible, I will first offer a reply, and then attempt to describe the operation of this principle so as to prove that it is not deficient in energy.

The objection proceeds on a wrong assumption. It presumes that we are capable of deciding beforehand what faith would be sufficient or insufficient for the purposes of religion, and that we are at liberty to receive or reject according to the estimate of our own judgment. But certainly we are not to trust our own antecedent judgment in a case like this. The christian system is not an invention of ours, neither can we control the power it may exert, or determine the consequences that may flow from it. The whole is dependent on that divine authority by which it has been communicated to us. It is matter of revelation and command; and if this simple faith be written in its records, we have no right to interpose our judgment, and say it must be insufficient. If the express declaration of Scripture be, that it shall 'overcome the world,' we have no right to step forward and allege that it is impossible.

Besides; why should we imagine it inadequate to the purposes for which it is ordained? Is it not the manner of God to bring about great effects from apparently feeble causes? It is so in every part of his works. His mightiest rivers, which roll over immense regions and bear the fertilizing influence of his providence to cities and nations—are collected by him from the drops that trickle from the rocks of the mountains, and the vapors that fall in dew upon their sides. His tremendous forests, that cover continents with their shade, are reared by him from a few seeds, so small that the wind blows them about as it were in sport. The countless multitudes of his children, who have acted and been happy on this stage of being, and are to crowd the habitations of eternity with life and bliss—were gradually collected from the few particles of dust which composed the first man's frame. So true it is, that he displays his power and scatters his blessings, by the operation of small means, rather than by large exertions, gradually, rather than suddenly. So true it is, that in all his ways, 'God chooses the weak things of the world to confound those that are mighty.' Why then should it be thought incredible that this simple truth, *Jesus is the Christ*, should be that which is to justify and sanctify, and save a miserable world?

Small it may be, and insignificant it may seem to man's perverted vision; but it may be all powerful in His hands, who has caused a few Galilean peasants to change the face of empires, and is able even of the stones to raise up children to Abraham.

This objection is also sometimes urged through a misunderstanding of the actual state of the question. It is argued against, as if we had asserted this to be the whole, as well as the foundation of christianity; as if we made no account of the building that is to be raised upon it; as if we inculcated a 'faith without works.' But this misapprehension might be easily removed. If one should say, that the root is the essential part of the tree, he would not be supposed to mean that the branches and fruit are of no value: and if one should carefully plant the root in his ground, we should take it for granted, that he desired, and would cherish, the branches and fruit. So it is in the christian system. When we call this doctrine the essential article, we do not undervalue all others, nor declare that there is none other. But we mean, that if this be faithfully planted and take root in the man, the rest of the system will grow from it, and the fruits of the spirit be borne upon its branches. And therefore we say, that if we see a man earnestly cultivating this, it should be satisfactory evidence to us that he is a disciple, deserving our charity and fellowship. We have no right to discard him because his trunk leans a little to another direction from our own, nor because the branches are a little more or a little less numerous. If they bear fruit, well; we may judge from that, whether the root have been well planted and whether the tree be good.

Consider then, the natural operation and direct tendency of this principle. One believes, sincerely and religiously, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Now I ask, is it possible for him to stop here, and no consequences to follow? If he do not believe it sincerely and religiously—if he take it only as any other historical truth, but not as having more concern with himself than the fact that Alexander was a conqueror, or Xerxes a king of Persia, then undoubtedly he may stop at the barren assent. But if, as I said,

he believe it sincerely and religiously, is it not impossible that he should rest here? For what is implied in such a belief? A belief in God, the Supreme Governor and Father, who had for ages spoken of that Messiah by his prophets, and whose purposes he was sent to fulfil—a belief in his character, authority, purposes, and will as the moral ruler of men—a belief that all the instruction of Jesus rests on the authority of God, and a consequent reception of whatever he teaches, as the true doctrine of religion; a belief that the way of acceptance and life is revealed by him, and that to disregard and disobey him, is to disregard the authority of God, and to subject ourselves to his displeasure to whom we are accountable at last. The mind of him who RELIGIOUSLY believes that Jesus is the Christ, cannot escape these consequences. They are momentous, they are affecting, they are practical consequences. They touch the springs of action, they agitate him with hope and fear, they teach him that he has an infinite interest at stake, they make him anxious for his eternal destiny. He feels that here he is bound by obligations which cannot be broken; that there is but one path left him, that of implicit submission to the instructions of this heavenly messenger, and a life of devotion, repentance and holiness. Since it were an insane inconsistency, to acknowledge this powerful truth, and yet live disregardful of its authority and uninfluenced by its requisitions.

It is to be considered, also, that this faith is something more, much more, than mere belief, inasmuch as the idea of confidence or trust, makes an essential part of it. To believe that Jesus is the Son of God, is to have *confidence* in him as such. Many examples might be adduced in which this sense is most obviously implied: as where our Lord says, 'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.' In these expressions is manifestly intended confidence, trust. Indeed nothing can be plainer, than that there can be no real religious faith, without implicit trust in its object. And accordingly, all the examples of faith, which the apostle has collected in his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews—Abraham and Moses, the prophets

and the martyrs,—are indisputably examples of confidence in divine providence, trust in divine promises. And the faith by which the christian, like those ancient worthies, is to overcome the world, is in like manner constituted of firm unreserved trust.

In this manner, then, a true reception of Jesus and trust in him, as the commissioned Messiah, the authorized Teacher, the appointed Legislator and Guide, inevitably leads to the christian graces; they are the legitimate and necessary consequences. If such a faith exist, it cannot stand alone; it must, it will, pervade and influence the soul, it will be seen and felt in the thoughts, the sentiments, the desires, the dispositions, the actions. It is not itself the whole; but it gives life to the whole. Every principle, necessary to the christian system and to acceptance with God, is connected with it and flows from it.

There are one or two passages in close connexion with that of our text, which confirm this estimate of its moral efficacy. In the fifteenth verse of the preceding chapter, it is written—'Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.' What stronger assertion could we desire? And how can we fancy any weakness in that faith, to which the apostle bears the strong testimony, that God is in him who professes it, and he in God?

Again he says, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.' What further testimony could be desired to the efficacy of this faith? He who truly possesses it, is regenerate, is become one of the adopted family of God, one of the household of heaven; and thus in him the very purpose of the christian dispensation is accomplished.

The same apostle tells us, that the very object of writing his Book of the Gospel, was, to establish the faith 'that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through his name.' Words cannot more distinctly state the necessary article of faith, or more decidedly assert its efficacy. Who can account it insufficient, when John declares that it opens the doors of life?

Add to these, the words of our text—'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' I ask therefore again, what further can we desire? What stronger testimony can be given to the strength of this principle? If it be sufficient to overcome the world, to give life through his name, to effect the christian regeneration, and a spiritual union with God; to what purpose can it be insufficient, to what work unequal? If this faith be weak, what faith shall be called strong?

Having thus established from various considerations, the sufficiency of the principle laid down in our text; let us further illustrate the subject by inquiring *in what manner it operates* so as to secure this effect.

It operates by strengthening the soul with such principles, and filling it with such resources, that it does not need the world for its happiness, but is capable of being happy independently of it. The world ruins a man by its temptations to sin, because he foolishly imagines indulgence in sin necessary to his happiness. The world makes a man miserable by its uncertainties and calamities, because he has set his heart upon its prosperity to make him happy. If it were not so, if he had provided sufficient sources of happiness in things independent of a sinful and changing world; then he certainly would not run into these destructive indulgences, nor wreck his peace by trusting to the deceitful joys of life. And this is precisely the work of Faith. It furnishes him with other means and resources of felicity, so rich, so abundant, that he has no need to draw upon sin or pleasure, and therefore is not corrupted by them, nor made wretched by temporal losses.

This may be better understood, perhaps, by observing the same thing in other examples. It is very observable, in the experience of life, that different men, equally eager in the pursuit of happiness, place their dependence for happiness in very different things; so that what is absolutely essential to one, may be of no importance to another, because his affections lie elsewhere. For example: here is one, who pursues sensual indulgence, lives for his appetites, and is wretched if they be restrained. Here is ano-

ther, who regards property as the chief good, and being wholly devoted to its acquisition, passes by with supreme indifference those indulgences which are essential to the other. Here is a third, who is solicitous for nothing but the acquisition of knowledge and literary eminence, who feels that for himself happiness can be found only in retirement and study; and he would feel small disturbance at a reverse of fortune affecting him in other respects. Instances of this sort are of daily observation—where one man pursues with the extremest earnestness, and loses with the deepest affliction, what another would think worth no pains to acquire, and would relinquish without a sigh. This depends entirely upon what each had persuaded himself to be essential to his happiness. The loss of the merest trifle, if he have accounted it essential to his happiness, may rack him with intolerable pangs. The heaviest calamity, if he have placed his happiness elsewhere, may scarcely cost him a tear. Ahab, the great king of Israel, had set his heart upon an insignificant vineyard, and because he could not obtain it, thought himself too wretched to live. But Paul the Apostle, 'suffered the loss of all things,' and gave them up cheerfully, because to none of them had he trusted for happiness, but his whole soul was absorbed in something else.

This explains to us the power of Faith, and shows the secret of its operation. If avarice is able to overcome sensuality, so that the miser is scrupulously temperate; if the love of learning can overcome the love of pleasure, so that the student will deny himself even to the loss of health; if the desire of distinction will overcome the love of ease, and of friends, and every other affection, so that the ambitious conqueror will live on a long life of hardship, privation, and danger, because his only happiness is to be great;—then, I ask, do you not understand how the noble and celestial principle of Faith, may overcome all these, yea, may 'overcome the world?' Do you not see how this mighty principle—which extends to things infinite, and glories immeasurable, and ages that cannot end—may become a RULING PASSION in the soul; may open a fountain of felic-

ity which shall make all others tasteless; may offer to inquiring man an honor and peace, in possessing which he shall think himself more than recompensed for the loss of all others? As the mother—who once, in the young hour of beauty and enjoyment, sailed round the giddy circle of pleasure, and could imagine no happiness of life but in the party and the dance, in admiration and gaiety; but now, with her little charge about her, rarely goes from home, and is satisfied to sit by them night and day, so changed that she regrets no enjoyments abroad, and feels not a desire to partake what was once her only pleasure—so he that is wedded to heavenly faith, absorbed in its new and purer employments and satisfactions, sees nothing to regret in the forbidden things of the world; is not unreasonably troubled by its cares, nor tempted by its seductions, nor overwhelmed by its disappointments;—he has pleasures independent of it, in the brightness and excellence of which, all others are dim, and in the enjoyment of which, the loss of others is unregretted.

Superiority to natural and temporal evil is not the chief purpose of the gospel, and yet, it is a common thing in the New Testament to declare, that the disciples shall be delivered from it, and unaffected by it. Our Lord, for example, commands his followers not to be anxious concerning their food and clothing, or the evils of poverty, nakedness and want; promising that if they seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness, all needful good will be added thereto—which is certainly a promise of deliverance from these temporal evils. So also he promises that 'every one who hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' Here too is a large promise of deliverance from temporal evil. What was intended by these promises? That they should actually never suffer want, but live in abundance? That they should actually receive a hundred fold more of house and lands and other possessions? No one supposes it. What then did our Lord mean? We may ascertain this point by inquir-

ing, why such possessions are so desirable, and why to be deprived of them is such an evil. The single reason is, that they are esteemed necessary to happiness. If then a man can be just as happy without them, it is no longer an evil to him to be deprived of them. If the want of them do not make him unhappy, it is not an evil to him to want them. The want of luxury and ease is no evil to the contented peasant, who has always lived in exposure, hardship, and labor, though it would be insufferable to the nobleman, who has been accustomed to fare sumptuously every day. So, likewise, if one receive a full and fair equivalent for the good of which he is deprived, he does not regard that privation as an evil. The enthusiast, who abandons fortune, prosperity, and friends for the solitude and devotion of a monastery, conceives himself to have received a full equivalent for his sacrifice, and it is therefore to him no evil. And let a man's privations be what they may, to him they are no calamity, so long as he feels that they are fully compensated to him.

It is on this principle, and through the compensating power of Faith, that we are enabled to understand our Lord's promises respecting temporal evils. He does not mean that his followers shall receive a hundred fold in *kind*, but in *happiness;* that is to say, they shall find that the happiness and hope of true religion, are more than a balance for their sufferings and privations; so that they would a hundred times rather endure these, than relinquish their profession in order to be free from them. This is perfectly obvious and true—as true now, as when it was uttered by our Lord. Why do we desire worldly good, and flee worldly evil? Because we desire happiness. But if religion warrants to us happiness independent of worldly good, and in spite of worldly evil, then we have what we desire; then our faith overcomes the world. That it does this, there are 'clouds of witnesses.' The apostles and martyrs, who endured all things, and in the midst of all 'sang praise to God;' and humbler christians, in the depths of poverty and distress, yet cheerful, content, and rejoicing; men, injured, threatened, persecuted; yet

patient, serene, and uncomplaining, while they can appeal to Him who judges righteously; men, lingering in painful sickness, cut off from the engagements of life, their prospects blasted, their hopes disappointed, their props torn away—yet not cast down nor dismayed; but finding in the power of faith and heavenly hope, a compensation for their trials, and a victory over the world.

Equally complete is their triumph over spiritual evil. They walk amid the deceitful disguises and fatal ambushes of sin, unseduced and unharmed. Though the passions within ally themselves to the solicitations without, and war against their souls; though the constitution of their bodily frame, and the temper of their mind, the circumstances in which they are thrown, the company which they frequent, and the cares which occupy them; all combine to introduce some disorder into their spirits, to allure or surprise them to what is wrong, and to array them, even against their wills, in disobedience to God; yet, over this fearful combination, against which unassisted man might combat in vain, these men of faith triumph. 'God hath given them the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Faith, where its dominion is established in the soul, acts like some superior charm, to quell the inferior nature, and awe the rebellious passions to submission. It brings up to them the image of the glorious master to whom they are bound; of the holy God, who is watching that he may judge them; of the future world, whose inheritance depends on their purity; and of all the misery and horrors, which follow in the train of unsubjected passion and voluntary sin. These press upon their minds, with united and intuitive operation, and with the spontaneous indignation of the patriarch they put the temptation to flight with the cry, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God.'

We perceive, then, the power of Faith. It is a practical principle, resting on the basis of a simple truth. It is a moral principle, swaying the affections and will; not barely a conviction of the understanding, but a feeling persuasion, an unwrought sentiment of the heart. It is confidence, trust, reliance, on one who has divine authority, and on whom it

is infinitely for our interest to lean. It excludes from the mind the power of inferior principles and motives, and fortifies it against the attacks of external calamity.

We may learn from this, my brethren, how to try and prove our own faith, and when to be satisfied with it. We may learn not to estimate its value by the number of propositions of which it is compounded, but by the spirit with which we embrace it, and the power it exercises over us. The question is not, Do we lay stress on a multitude of fundamental articles? Are we skilful to discriminate the shades of difference between error and truth upon subjects of intricacy and controversy? Do we love to be occupied in mysterious musings, and to be involved in contemplation of deep and perplexing inquiries? These are not the marks of a saving faith. But the question rather is, have we acknowledged *Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God*, so heartily, that he is really and habitually our MASTER, and that his authority rules and controls us in all things? so that this faith works by love, purifies our hearts, and overcomes the world? Is it the parent of holy desires, pure dispositions, good living, and earnest aspirations after the excellence and bliss of heaven? It is for these qualities that faith is valuable. It is by these that it works out our salvation. It is this efficacy in reforming, purifying, elevating, spiritualizing the human character, that constitutes the glory of the gospel. When it has done this, it has accomplished its great work. If it be doing this for us, we may be satisfied that our faith is neither fatally erroneous, nor weak. But if it be pure as that of angels, and yet do not display this moral power, it is no better than 'sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.'

DISCOURSE IV.

JESUS THE MEDIATOR.

1 Timothy, ii. 5.

For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus.

There are few passages of scripture in which a doctrine is expressed more distinctly and unequivocally than in this. It states, in terms, which do not admit of misconstruction, the great fundamental article of all religion, that there is 'one God;' and the prime truth of revealed religion, that there is 'one mediator between God and men.' It speaks of them as separate beings, distinct in nature, diverse in office, and not to be confounded together. It intimates no mysterious union of natures, by which the mediator is God as well as man, and the supreme Deity is mediator between himself and his creatures. But simply declares the plain, intelligible facts, that 'there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'

The Apostle is thought to be referring in these words, to the opinions of the Jews, to whose notions and feelings there is frequent tacit allusion in all his writings. They prided themselves in their ancient claim to be God's people; they fancied him to be exclusively their God, and the privileges of revelation to be confined to themselves. But the apostle in the preceding verses tells them, no—'God will have *all* to be saved,' Gentiles as well as Jews, 'and come to the knowledge of the truth;' and then adds in our text, that to Gentile as well as Jew, there is but one and the same God, and to all alike one and the same Mediator.

All preference and distinction is now done away, and the chosen descendants of Israel have no longer any privileges above their brethren of other nations.

But we have less concern with this allusion of the apostle, than with the great truth which he inculcates. To the whole family of man, there is but one God—a truth, once strange and heretical, though to our minds so familiar. However separated into tribes, however distinct in history, character, and manners; however cast asunder by the physical boundaries of the globe, or the artificial barriers of society; however divided by interest or policy, or alienated by traditionary enmity; still the bond of nature connects them together, they have one Father, and one God hath created them. 'He hath formed of one blood all that dwell upon the face of the earth, and hath appointed the bounds of their habitation.' They have not indeed recognised this common and universal Sovereign; but have bestowed upon others the honors due to him alone. Superstition and folly have multiplied the objects of adoration, and peopled heaven and earth and sea with peculiar divinities. They have sometimes bowed down to the host of heaven, and sometimes to the monsters of earth, and sometimes to the workmanship of their own hands, and have warily divided their worship between rival gods. But amidst the whole, may be heard the invariable testimony of nature, that the true object of all adoration is but one—one, infinite, independent, mind; the origin and cause, the support and end, of all other beings and all other things. He that fashioned the resplendent heavens, and rolled abroad their glorious and countless worlds of light; who moulded the beautiful earth, and cast forth the waters of the wonderful sea, and peopled all with their innumerable tribes, infinitely diversified in structure, in powers, and in happiness; is One, and one only. 'Though there be that are called gods, whether in earth or in heaven—as there are Gods many and Lords many—yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.'

This doctrine of the divine unity is essential to true religion. Erring in this, the pagan nations have strayed alike from truth and from morality in their religion, and been

lost in the most debasing corruptions and the most mischievous superstitions. And it is not strange that it should have been so; for the moral character of the religion and of the worshippers will be conformed to that of the object of worship; and where these are numerous, some of them must be bad. So long as but one infinite object of worship is acknowledged, right reason will teach that He must be all present and all perfect; but where divinities are multiplied, as they cannot all be perfect, nor all exercise the same jurisdiction, their varieties of imperfection will of course give countenance to varieties of vice, and a crowd of gods afford shelter to a crowd of sins. So it has proved in the history of the world; vice and profligacy, irreligion and impiety, have increased with the multiplication of objects of religious homage. Among the chosen people, corruption and immorality crept in with the introduction of subordinate divinities; and all the vices, which in so great measure destroyed their religious character and made nugatory the power of their religious law, may be traced to the demoralizing influence of idolatry.

Let us then see to it, that we be not led, under any form, or any pretence, to depart from this great principle. It has ever been found the only true basis of piety, the only sufficient security of virtue. 'Beware lest any man spoil you of this, by philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.' Be jealous over this with a godly jealousy; remembering that the first of all the commandments is ushered in with the proclamation, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord!' and that our Master, in solemn prayer, has made the declaration, 'This is life eternal to know *Thee, the only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.'

And who is Jesus Christ, whom God has sent?

The doctrine concerning him is expressed in the other clause of our text; 'and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'

Observe here the truth of that divine saying, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.' Men have imagined that they could not sufficiently multiply the objects of religious adoration.

But in the simplicity of that mighty universe, which man's imagination cannot grasp, there is but one such object. Men have fancied that they could not interpose too many friends and advocates between their insignificance and the high majesty of heaven; they have crowded the access with numberless mediators to solicit benediction for them, and have filled churches and altars and cloisters with the images of saints who might pray for them—until the face of the great Supreme has been hidden, and their dependance on Him has been forgotten. But the simplicity of God's government rejects this crowd of suitors, whom man would thrust forward to shelter his weakness, and appoints ONE mediator between himself and his offspring—one, to be the medium of his communications to them, and of their approaches to him. There is One on the throne, and One before the throne. When the supplicant draws nigh, his devotion is neither doubtful nor distracted. He knows that there is but One to be addressed; he feels that there is but One by whom he may obtain access; and his soul is absorbed in a single undivided act of trust and praise.

The title of Mediator is in four several passages ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament. In order to understand clearly its import, we must consider that a *Mediator* is one who acts *between* two persons or parties. He is the MEDIUM between them, the medium of intercourse or communication. And as such an one, among men, is needed, not in the ordinary current of affairs, but on occasions of difference or dissension; it has happened that the name is most usually given in the sense of a *peace-maker*, or one who effects reconciliation. In this sense it is doubtless applicable to our Lord; for one important object of his mission and religion is to reconcile men to God; that is, to render them his friends by doing away their dislike to his holy law, and uniting them to him in love and obedience. Hence God is said 'to be in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' And to this end, it is written, 'it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself.'

It is not, however, in this sense only, but in a more extended sense, that we are to understand this title; as indicating, not only one who makes peace, but one who, in a general sense, is *the medium of communication between* God and men. This is the meaning which the word bears in the New Testament. Thus Paul says, speaking of the law, [Gal. iii. 19.] 'it was ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator.' What is meant by Moses being thus called the mediator of the law, may be learned from his own language in speaking of the same transaction; [Deut. v. 5.] 'I stood *between* the Lord and you at that time, to *show you the word* of the Lord.'* In this instance the name is manifestly given him, not in the restricted sense of a peacemaker, but in that of his being the medium of communication. In no other sense is it applied to Moses.

It is obviously in the same sense applied to Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews [viii. 6.] where he is styled 'the Mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises,' than that of Moses. Now as Moses was Mediator of the ancient covenant, inasmuch as through him it was communicated to the people; it must be in the same sense, that Jesus is called the 'Mediator of a better covenant.'

This example serves to define and settle the term in its application to our Lord, and teaches us how to understand it in the other passages in which it occurs. Thus when the apostle contrasts the mildness of the new dispensation with the terrors which accompanied the introduction of the old, [Heb. xii. 24.] he mentions 'Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant;' evidently as the chosen messenger of love by whom it was brought.

In the same sense we are to understand him, [Heb. ix. 15.] where he speaks of the Mediator as having died that he might certify the new covenant and render it 'of force;' as all testaments he adds, are required to be ratified with blood. So also are we to interpret the title in our text. It has pleased God to have intercourse with his creatures, to

* Hoc est, eram vester μεσίτης, interpres, internuncius, Dei ad vos legatus. *Schulz; in loc.*

establish with them a covenant, and pledge to them his promises. He, through whose instrumentality this is done, is for that reason called 'the Mediator between God and men.' 'The law came by Moses,' who was thus mediator of the old covenant; 'but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,' who was thus mediator of the new. By the same channel of mediation God has also appointed that his offspring shall have access to him, through him 'come to the Father,' and 'in his name,' address their praises and supplications. 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.'

There are thus two divisions under which the office of mediator presents itself; the one as bringing down to men the messages of God, the other as bearing up to God the offerings of men.

In regard to the first, it has been well observed by a profound and celebrated writer, that the whole system of the divine administration toward man is a system of mediation; and that the mediatorial office of Christ is therefore analogous to the whole economy of the divine dispensations. 'The visible government which God exercises over the world, is by the instrumentality and mediation of others.'

'We find by experience that God does appoint mediators, to be the instruments of good and evil to us, the instruments of his judgment and his mercy.'* As far as we can observe, this method is universal. He rules his creatures, not by speaking to them with his own voice, not by touching them with his own finger, but through the medium of other beings and inferior agents. Men are created, not by an express and direct exertion of the forming Power, but are brought into being through the medium of parents. Life is supported, not by the immediate energy of the Almighty, but by the subordinate provisions of labor and food; and this food is sent not directly from God, like the manna in the desert, but by the circuitous operation of sunshine and rain, and a multitude of established natural causes. When he would bless, he raises up human benefactors; when he would rebuke, he rouses human enemies. He bestowed his favors on Israel through the ministry of

* Butler's Analogy, Part II. chap 5.

Moses, Joshua, David, and Cyrus; he inflicted punishment for their crimes by the hands of the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Romans.

When therefore we are told, that in the affairs of salvation, there is a 'Mediator between God and men,' we are taught what is perfectly coincident with the uniform method of divine procedure; we behold 'a beautiful analogy, in a very considerable and important point, between the settled method of God's natural providence, and the extraordinary operations of his grace.'* As in the natural so in the spiritual world, we discern the agency of God only through the action of second causes. We behold his glory, not in its own essential refulgence, but 'in the face of Jesus Christ.' We receive 'all spiritual blessings in heavenly things,' through Christ; through him 'come grace and truth;' through him 'is the kindness of God toward us;' through him is 'repentance and the remission of sins;' 'peace with God,' and 'the gift of eternal life.' In a word, whatever we have received pertaining to life and godliness, is derived to us from God through him. It is he, coming from God, who has taught us all that we know, and made certain all that we hope. Except in him, we have no provision of light and strength, no secure principle of virtue, no assurance of clemency and grace. The communications of God are the foundation on which we rest; and they have been made through the mediation of his son.

The second division of this doctrine implies, that Christ is also the channel through which men are to hold intercourse with God. 'As all the distinguishing spiritual benefits, which we enjoy, have been conferred upon us through Christ; so our services and sacrifices, which we are enabled to perform and offer, should be presented to God the Father in and through him.'† It was his direction to the apostles, that they should ask 'in his name.' The apostles enjoined it on the churches, to approach God in praise and prayer, in thanksgiving and confession, 'through him,' 'by him,' and 'in his name.' The injunction has ever

* James Foster.

† Lardner's Sermon on John xvi. 24.

been observed; and the constant devotions of believers ascend to God through Jesus Christ. They come to the mercy seat, not in their own name, but in that of the Mediator, and hope to be heard because they come through him.

As this is the prescribed and familiar form of prayer, it is important to understand what is intended by it; since, if we would have it done acceptably, it must be done intelligently. Let us inquire, therefore, what is implied in praying 'through Christ,' or 'in the name of Christ.'

It is not intended, we may first of all remark, that we are not to come to God directly, and address him personally; but quite the contrary. 'Ye shall ask *me* nothing,' said our Lord; 'but whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' The express doctrine of his religion is, that men shall address the Father, and the Father only. And therefore, the offering of prayers through Christ, cannot be understood to mean that they are first to be presented to him, and by him presented to God. All the precepts and examples of scripture direct us to God himself, personally; and the phrase in question, as we shall presently see, bears a meaning which does not contradict them.

Neither are we to understand it as forbidding all acts of worship in which this form of words is not used. For we have repeated instances of both ascriptions and supplications by the apostles, in which this form does not appear.

It is the principle on which our devotions are framed, and the spirit in which they are uttered, rather than any verbal or formal exactness, which these scriptural directions enjoin. The sacred writers express little solicitude about the mere form of prayer.

Neither are we to understand by prayer through Christ, that we are to ask to have our desires granted 'for the sake of Christ;' for this is an expression without authority or warrant in the holy volume. The expression is once found in our version in connexion with the forgiveness of sins, which God is said to have granted 'for Christ's sake.' This however is an acknowledged mistranslation of the

original word. It should be, as in all other passages relating to this subject, *in* or *through* Christ.* To ask in prayer *for Christ's sake*, is without example or authority in the sacred writings, and is a very different thing from asking *through* Christ.

In what sense then is this form of words to be understood?

A little examination will satisfy us, that it is in this. We are to pray, as the disciples of Christ, guided by faith in him, and influenced by the devout dispositions which he requires;—'through him,' because through the directions he has given for acceptable prayer, and the encouragement he has offered to sincere worshippers; 'in his name,' because by his authority, confiding in his warrant, commanded and invited by him, members of that family which he has brought nigh to God, and given access to the throne.

That this is the general sense of these expressions will be rendered obvious by observing how they are used in other instances.

The Levites blessed the people, and Israel went out to battle, 'in the name of the Lord;' that is, very evidently, by his authority and direction, by faith in him. The prophets spake 'in the name of the Lord,' and our Saviour says, 'I am come in my Father's name;' plainly meaning, by his authority and direction, receiving from him their commission. So the apostles preached and wrought miracles 'in the name of Jesus;' by his authority, under his commission, by faith in him. So they commanded the believers 'to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus;' that is, in compliance with his authority, and conformably to the spirit of his religion. To pray 'in his name,' is one of the things they were to do, and must have a similar interpretation. It is to pray by his authority, according to his instructions, by faith in him, in the character and with the spirit of his disciples.

It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to use the name of a person for his doctrine or religion. Thus it is said, 'Moses is preached every sabbath day;' meaning the religion of Moses. 'We preach Christ,' meaning the religion

* Ephesians iv. 32. εν Χριστω.

of Christ. We are said 'to put on Christ,' 'to be in Christ,' 'to profess Christ,' and a multitude of similar phrases; by which is intended, that we are to embrace, to adopt, to profess, the *religion* of Christ. So also in the instance of prayer *through Christ*, we may understand *through his religion*, or doctrine; since it is entirely through the influence of his religion, its instructions, directions, encouragements, and promises, that we are enabled to worship God acceptably. It is these which prepare our minds, and lead us to the mercy seat. We approach, because the instructions which Jesus has given, and on which our faith relies, guide us thither. That is to say, as before, we come *as his disciples, under his authority, and by faith in him.* It is this coming in the character of his disciples, which gives us hope that we shall be heard. And this hope or expectation is well founded, just in proportion as we are truly his disciples, and pray fervently in his faith. There is no charm in the words, no talisman in the forms we utter, no mysterious efficacy by which they force their way upward, from whatever heart they may rise. We might as well pray in the name of Mahomet, as in that of Christ, if we do not pray as disciples of Christ—not nominally and outwardly, but heartily and consistently as his disciples. It is in this circumstance that we are to trust, and not in the belief that Jesus seconds every prayer, and carries it to the Father. For he expressly says, 'Ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you;' that is, it is not from this circumstance that you are to take encouragement; you are not to depend for acceptance on my intercession;—and he adds, 'For my Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.' Here he states availing prayer in his name, to be that which comes from those who love him, and have faith in him, that is, from his disciples; not that which trusts for acceptance to his interposition only. For fully as that intercession may be offered for the faithful, it is nowhere promised to the insincere. So also says the Apostle John; 'Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in

his sight.' Which likewise conducts us to the same conclusion—that prayer, in the consistent character of disciples, is that prayer in his name, which meets acceptance and blessing.

In this sense it is, that the mediation of Christ opens the way of access to God. And in this doctrine, as there is evidently an admonition for the presumptuous, so there is encouragement for the humble and distrustful. For how abundantly have the instructions, the aids, the invitations of a kind and compassionate God been spread forth, to make the way to his mercy seat accessible and free, and to remove all impediments which might obstruct or alarm. How graciously has the Mediator toiled, how earnestly entreated, how willingly suffered, that the path of promise might not be hidden, and that none of God's offspring might leave the way of life for lack of a cheering voice, or an assisting arm. So eminently is the gospel a system of grace! And Oh, with what devout gratitude should we contemplate this evidence of it! Weak, ignorant, sinful, in our best desires and purest offerings, and therefore oftentimes dreading to approach directly to him who is infinitely pure and 'cannot look on sin;' how consoling is it to know, that there is one to offer encouragement and hope, and lead us tenderly by the hand to our Father's feet; one, who himself has shared our infirmities, and can therefore pity them; who has himself borne our weakness, and endured temptations, though without sin; and who, gentle and forbearing, 'breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax,' and utters no accents to the humble and believing, but those of encouragement and peace!

Brethren, let us remember this in our prayers, let us be emboldened and consoled by it in our apprehensions and despondency. 'Seeing that we have this great high priest, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession, and come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'

DISCOURSE V.

JESUS THE SAVIOUR.

MATTHEW i. 21.

And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.

IT was a custom among the Israelites, of which frequent examples are recorded in their sacred books, to bestow upon their children significant names, intimating either the feelings of the parent, or the circumstances of the birth, or the character and destiny of the offspring. Such are all the names in the patriarchal history; some of which, as those of Israel and Sarah, were changed in commemoration of some epoch in their lives, or to mark their altered fortunes. It is further observable respecting this custom, that the name was often framed by a combination of one of the names of God. Thus Isaiah means *the salvation of the Lord;* Elisha, *salvation of God;* Elijah, *God the Lord*, or *the strong Lord;* Elihu, *he is my God himself;* Lemuel, *God with them;* and a child, given as a pledge of deliverance to Judah in the reign of Ahaz, was called Immanuel, that is, *God with us*. As this prophecy was also applied to the Messiah, he is on that occasion once called *Immanuel;* intimating that by his residence among men, the presence of God would be particularly manifest. There can be no ground then for the opinion that this name implies a divine nature in Jesus, as if the very God, literally and personally, came to abide with us. For, as we see, this application of the name of God to men was a common

thing; and if Christ's being once called Immanuel could argue that he was truly God, a man's being always called Elijah, Elihu, or Lemuel would no less certainly prove *him* to be truly God. It was in his case, as in the others, a significant name, and not an assertion of personal divinity.

The name *Jesus* is also one of appropriate significancy. It means *Saviour*. It intimates the deliverance which he was sent to accomplish. It designates the sense in which he was to bless the world. Thus his very name is a memorial of his office; so that we cannot speak of him without being reminded both of the honor which he had from God, and the blessing which he brought to men. We call him Christ, *the anointed of God;* Jesus, *the Saviour of men.*

It is in the character of a Saviour that we are to consider him at this time; in doing which, we may follow the suggestion of our text, and inquire, under three heads,

I. Whom he is to save;

II. From what he is to save;

III. How he is to save;

or, in other words, we shall speak of *the subjects*, *the nature*, and *the method* of the salvation which he came to effect.

I. We are to consider, *whom he is to save.* Our text says, 'He shall save *his people*.' Who are to be understood by this designation?

If we reflect for a moment on the circumstances under which the Messiah came, we shall perceive that the Jewish nation is primarily intended. This had been eminently distinguished as God's People, having enjoyed for ages the peculiar manifestations of his favor. Prophets from God had spoken of the time when his grace should visit them with yet higher glory, in a prince and deliverer of the house of David, whose splendid reign was always described in closest connexion with their destinies. To them accordingly, his mission was addressed. He came not to the Gentiles, but to the lost sheep of Israel. Among them, and for them, his personal labors were devoted. For them his prayers and tears were given to the last moment of his life. It was only when they had rejected his gospel

with incurable obstinacy, that his apostles were directed to carry its message to other nations. 'It was necessary,' as Paul said, 'that this word of God should first be spoken to them.' It was therefore fitting that he should be announced as the Saviour of 'his people;' and this the rather, as their deliverance, which was the first object, shall be the final effect of his ministry. That alienated and broken family shall be brought back to its inheritance, and 'all Israel be saved.'

This, however, is not a sufficient answer to our inquiry, for salvation is not confined to this people. We accordingly find it written, that 'he came to seek and to save that which was lost.' Who are intended by this term? How lost? By what means, and in what way, lost? The answer is, lost in sin, strayed away from obedience and goodness, lost therefore to happiness. As the younger son, who departed from his father's house and became a wretched vagabond in a strange land, is on that account described as 'lost;' so they who have forsaken God's paternal presence and service, and lived in thoughtless and vicious habits of disobedience, till the peace of virtue is gone, and the misery of sin overtakes them, are also said to be 'lost.' And how truly said! lost to duty, and therefore to happiness! lost, their peace of mind, their serenity of conscience, honor, comfort, and hope; strangers to his presence who made them, rebels against his grace who loves them; and—if they will not arise and come to their Father, who is ready to welcome their returning and contrite steps—perishing with the famine of the soul, and lost forever. These are the objects of the Saviour's compassionate search. 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world *to save sinners*.'

He is also said to be 'the Saviour of the world.' For the world itself was lost. The knowledge and worship of the true God was gone from it. Men groped after the way of acceptance and truth, but could not find it. Religion, the true mistress of human virtue and happiness, had been thrust aside, and bloody superstition and impure idolatry

reigned in her stead. 'Darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people,' and sin and misery ruled triumphant over the world which God had formed for happiness and goodness. Then it was that 'the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world'—sunk as it was, in hopeless corruption, from which human wisdom had striven to raise it in vain. It was an object alone worthy of divine interposition. If mankind had been incorrupt in religion and morals, there had been no occasion for a special messenger from heaven, no necessity for his supernatural light, for his instructions in righteousness, for the motives to repentance which he furnished, for the solemn warnings which he published, for the holy promises which he proclaimed, for the offers of pardon which he brought. Men might have been ignorant and barbarous, and subjected to all the miseries of this transitory state; yet if they had been holy, worshippers of God, righteous among men, where could have been the call for the labors and sacrifices of an ambassador of God? It was only because the world was lying in wickedness, and men were dead in trespasses and sins, that God sent forth his Son with the dispensation of truth and grace. And to whom was this dispensation addressed? To all that have need of it; to all that are 'lost;' to 'the world;' to all men. There is no exception, no limitation. The gracious proclamation speaks indiscriminately to all, and offers a rich, impartial, unbounded provision, for the guidance and redemption of the world.

II. We were to consider, in the next place, the *nature of this salvation*, or *from what* Jesus is to save. 'He shall save his people *from their sins*.'

This is in perfect conformity with the remarks already made. The great root of evil and wretchedness is sin; and its prevalence is the only cause which renders a Saviour necessary. Freedom from sin is freedom from all essential ill. With this also, the language of Scripture strikingly corresponds. It represents salvation to consist in the removal of sin and its consequences, and the substitution in its place of holiness, with its happy consequences and lasting rewards. Jesus came 'to put away sin;' 'to give re-

pentance and remission of sins;' 'to bless in turning away every one from his iniquities;' 'to redeem from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' This is the constant language of the New Testament, which no man can read without the persuasion, that a moral regeneration, a deliverance from the power of sin and perfection in purity and holiness, is the purpose to be effected by the gospel; that in this consists its salvation, commencing upon earth, and consummated in the glory and bliss of eternity.

A strict adherence to the language of the Scriptures on this point, will keep us from the error of imagining, that the evil from which Jesus saves is the curse of man's original condition, the fearful destiny in which he is involved by nature. Now it is not only perfectly inconceivable that a benevolent being should have subjected his creatures to such a miserable fate, prior to their sinning, or even to their existing; but, which is more to the purpose, the sacred writers perpetually teach, that the misery to be saved from is that of sin, not of natural condition; that the wrath to be escaped is that which visits their own transgressions, not that which awaits them because they are men, or to which they are naturally subjected. They speak of no evil prior to or greater than that of sin. They speak of no curse antecedent to this, or independent of it. And they propose to save from this as the grand, the essential, the all comprehensive ill, leading to infinite consequences of wretchedness and despair.

We are very ready to suppose that the work of redemption is some expedient for getting rid of the *punishment* due to sin—as if that were of all things the most to be desired; and thence we are easily led to persuade ourselves, that we may so take advantage of the work which has been wrought as to escape the punishment, though we may not have relinquished the sin. Thus to avoid the penalty, and yet enjoy the transgression, has always been a chief object of false religions, and men would fain believe that it has been accomplished in the true. But let us not be de-

ceived. No such preposterous compromise has been made. It is inconsistent with all that we have been taught either by experience or religion. For what says experience? The penalty of sin often continues to visit the sinner long after he has repented and reformed. The impiety, indiscretion, and vices of youth, for example, are followed with suffering and shame through life, and burden the memory with bitter thoughts as long as reflection lives. But it would not be so if the grand design were simply to provide an escape from punishment, or to devise some means of abolishing it. In this case all such suffering must have been done away at once. Let us not then be deceived. Even the assurance of pardon, is no assurance that the consequences of transgression shall be altogether removed. For what says the Scripture? 'Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their iniquities.'

And if we inquire of religion, as taught either by nature or by revelation, what is it, in strict truth, which God designs especially to promote by his government and his dispensations? Happiness? Yes, unquestionably. But how? happiness only? at any rate? of any description? If so, there were no need of laws and restraints, and moral means, and institutions of discipline and instruction; for he might by the arbitrary appointments of his will lavish it abundantly on his creatures. But surely it is not so. Being a holy God, whose abhorrence of sin is equal to his desire of happiness, and in whose view there is no true happiness where there is not holiness; he, therefore, makes holiness the primary object of his government, and the moral perfection of his offspring, the favorite purpose of his dispensations. Nothing will answer in the place of this. He cannot be satisfied by some plausible device for remitting punishment, nor by shifting it off upon some other than the transgressor, nor even by arbitrarily excluding all suffering from his universe. It is not suffering, but sin, which he would exterminate; he could esteem no salvation accomplished for his children, until this principle of all evil is itself utterly eradicated.

Let us not, then, be deceived in regard to the nature of this salvation. It is not the abolition of punishment, but of sin. As when a man is saved from a disease, it is by removing the disease, that is, by curing him of it; so he is saved from his sins by being rid of them. It would avail little to deliver the sick man from his pangs, if his disorder were still unrelieved, and bearing him down imperceptibly to the grave. And it would avail little to deliver the sinner from punishment, and the sufferings which follow in the train of vice, if his evil dispositions were left unrebuked. For while he remains a moral being, he may choose for himself what happiness he pleases, yet if he cannot relish that of virtue, he will find no content. Let his fetters be stricken off, let the fire be quenched, and the gnawing worm be dead; open to him the rich paradise of heaven, and give him place among the obedient and holy worshippers around the throne of God; yet if he have not been redeemed from sin, nor his affections reclaimed from its love, there is no beauty nor bliss for him there; but he wanders among them a discontented stranger, self-tormenting and solitary, without companion, enjoyment or home—his depraved habits and corrupted taste rendering insipid and loathsome, the light and felicity of eternity.

III. We were to consider, in the third place, *the manner in which this salvation is effected;* or *how* Jesus saves from sin.

The main point to be insisted upon under this head is, that the character of the means must be conformable to that of the end to be gained. The end to be gained, as we have just seen, is a moral salvation. Our Lord must consequently have employed moral means. The misery from which man is to be delivered, originates in and depends upon the wrong state of his mind and affections. It is to be removed, it can be removed, by no arbitrary appointments of place or condition, by no exertion of absolute power, like the striking off of chains at a blow. It can be only by the operation of spiritual and moral remedies, suited to the spiritual and moral malady, which shall

act gradually on the spirit, and restore it to health, vigor, and virtue.

The christian dispensation is a provision of means for the regeneration of free, intelligent, voluntary agents, existing in a state of probation. Now it is essential to the nature of such beings, in such a state, that they be subjected to a moral government, and be influenced through a moral process. If it were otherwise, then He, who desires the salvation of all, and has evinced that desire by the costly apparatus of his dispensations from the beginning of the world, need only to have spoken the word, and all would have been changed at once into holy and happy beings. But this has not been done, because it would be inconsistent with their very nature; would defeat the very purpose of probation; would put an end to their moral agency, and convert them into merely mechanical instruments, incapable of either choosing or attaining virtue. Designing, therefore, to treat them agreeably to the nature, which he has bestowed upon them, and which he would not change nor contradict, he has instituted corresponding means of salvation. He has not sent his Son to touch them with a wand, to re-create them by some inexplicable and unparticipated operation, like a spell or charm. But to 'sanctify them through the truth;' to 'justify them through faith;' to regenerate them 'by the word of God.'

It is plain, then, that there is nothing either arbitrary or compulsory in the gospel dispensation. Salvation is offered to men, but not forced upon them. It is left to depend upon the use which is made of those privileges and aids, which the grace of God has bestowed. It is thus entirely conditional. It is dependent on every man's free choice. If he will go into the ark, lo, it is open, and there is room enough; but he is not compelled to go in. The waters of life flow by him in copious and inviting streams; if he will come and take them, he shall live forever; but let him act his own pleasure, there is no constraint. The table of heaven is spread, and urgent invitations are sent abroad, and a joyous welcome awaits those who will be guests. But it rests with themselves to accept or refuse.

Jesus has thrown wide the doors of everlasting day, and poured a strong light on the true path of peace. He has placed himself at its entrance, to invite and urge and warn men—by their allegiance to God, by the miseries of their present condition, by the welfare of their souls, by the inconceivable glories of heaven—to pursue the way of holiness and life. He has offered them guidance, direction, aid and blessing. They need but come to him, and they shall have life.

It is thus that salvation is by grace. Grace *provides the means*. Sinful and undeserving man, by an act of essential benignity, by the unmerited favor of divine love, is put in the condition to escape from sin, and reach the bliss of heaven. It is a general provision for the human race; not a plan for the recovery of a selected few, nor a favor bestowed upon individuals; but an impartial offer of mercy to all—which offer having been made, and the opportunity having been given, each one is then, separately, to 'work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.' The grace of God makes the most ample and munificent provision, even, as it were, the wings of an angel for his flight upward; but if he will not stretch them and rise, it sends down no chariot of fire to bear away his reluctant soul.

I do not know that this portion of the subject needs further illustration; but we may readily find it, by recurring to the history of the Old Testament. The expressions which are applied to the christian salvation, were also applied to the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. They were said to be 'redeemed' and 'saved,' and the name given to their leader into Canaan was that of Saviour. Joshua is the same name as Jesus. Now that people were 'saved' and 'redeemed,' through the miraculous means of salvation which God with a strong hand brought to them, and by their using those means according to his commandments. He redeemed them, not by literally paying any ransom to their masters, nor by providing substitutes in their stead, nor by offering in any way an equivalent for their service; but by opening for them a way of escape, through which they might pass to freedom

and independence, and guiding them in it by his presence and power. So does he save us through Jesus Christ—by opening to us a free path of escape from sin and misery, and guiding and aiding us in it, through the perils of life to our heavenly home. These cases illustrate one another. In each the gracious power of God opened the way and provided the means; and in each, man must walk in the way and use the means; else, instead of inheriting the blessing, he perishes in the wilderness.

But what are the means of salvation which Jesus has thus instituted? They are, in one word, the revelation which he has made of the doctrines and promises of true religion, and whatever provision exists for perpetuating and promoting its influence. Divine truth is the great instrument of regeneration and sanctification. Every circumstance in the communication of this which tends to insure its efficacy, is part of that great system of means by which Jesus would operate for the redemption of man. The ministry and death of our Lord himself, the recorded word of the New Testament, the establishment of teachers and a church, the institutions of worship, preaching, and ordinances;—the arguments which convince the understanding, the commandments which control the conduct, the motives which persuade the will and subdue the passions, the entreaties which move the affections, the warnings which assail the fears and the promises which elevate the hopes; all being adapted by a moral operation to lead men to faith, repentance, and holiness, are to be regarded as constituting a vast and universal system of means, which Christ was sent to establish, to maintain, and to superintend; which operates uniformly and uninterruptedly, like the sun and air and dew upon the natural creation; always active and fertilizing, but needing the co-operation of human labor for their complete and best effect.

The efficacy of these means is essentially promoted by their association with the personal labors and sufferings of him, who died to establish them among men. By that painful but voluntary death, he gave the most solemn proof of the infinite value of his work. He exhibited the most

disinterested evidence of his own earnestness and love. He made the most affecting manifestation of the strength of the divine abhorrence of sin, and of the greatness of the divine compassion for man. It was thus provided, that if any had been unaffected by his teaching, uninfluenced by his example, unmoved by the wonders of his life, and the holy tenderness and zeal with which he had devoted himself for them; they might at least be touched when they should see him pouring out his soul for them in death, and so be won by his cross. And with how many has it proved so! They have resisted all his teaching, persuasion, and entreaty; they have been able to see without emotion, the beauty of his spotless life, and his laborious benevolence. But when they were brought to his cross, and saw that he was not only willing to teach and rule them, but with unparalleled love to die for them; they have been able to resist no longer. Their hard hearts have melted. Their proud spirits have yielded. In the moment of tenderness they have abjured their sins, and resolved to live unto him 'who loved them and gave himself for them.'

Is it thus that we have applied to ourselves the rich grace of the gospel? Have we thus felt the power of its motives and laws, and surrendered our souls to the influence of its holy and benevolent spirit? Have we experienced the worth of the doctrines and promises of a gracious Saviour?

That we need all this, how can we be ignorant! Liable, as we are, to infirmity and temptation, subjected to evil passions, exposed to stray from duty, and God, and peace, in pursuing the concerns of the world; how much and how constantly do we need the instructions and sanctions of our divine master, the encouragement of his promises, and the aid which he provides from above! If we listen to his awful and delightful revelations, and fill our hearts with a commanding and habitual sense of them; then the power of sin is weakened; its sceptre and chains are broken; we go forward in the light and liberty of the children of God. 'The son has made us free, and we are free indeed.' But if, slighting these means of guidance and salvation, we

seek to pass forward unsupported and alone; how serious is the danger that we shall be lost in error, overcome by temptation, corrupted by the world, and miserable in the end. For where is there security, except where Christ has provided it? Where is there 'joy and peace,' except 'in believing?' And 'how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?'

Is there any one, then, moved by such considerations, anxious for the welfare of his soul, and earnest to know, what he shall do to be saved? Let him receive in answer the words of the apostle; 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Every direction and every preparation is included in faith; for when you have gone with faith to the word of the Saviour, you trust an infallible guide, who cannot lead you astray. A true faith and reliance on him, will insure to you the right influence of the means he has provided, and the spiritual aid he has promised.

Do you ask further, how you shall attain, cherish, cultivate this faith? Let it be answered, *by diligent and earnest attention to the means of religion.* Hope for no attainments, except you use the means for arriving at them. Least of all expect a powerful and ruling faith in Christ, without the most devoted use of the means which he has instituted. Be instant in prayer; be frequent in meditation; study the scriptures; be punctual at the worship and ordinances of God's house; seek instruction from the works of pious men, and in the conversation of those who are themselves religious. Use these methods vigilantly and perseveringly. It is not the occasional use of them, *occasional* reading, meditation, and prayer, which will keep the heart right, or maintain the ascendancy of religious principle. The habit is necessary. These things must be done customarily and constantly. For the principle of the religious affection, which rests ultimately in God, is like that of the child to its parents. And how is it that that affection, not in a few, but nearly without exception, in all children, is rendered so strong, lively, and permanent? The reason is that the child is always with its

parents, continually lives with them and speaks with them, knows and feels that it receives every thing from them, their image becomes inwoven with all its thoughts, affections, and plans, and makes part of its essential happiness. Any man that will take care to be thus always with God, to think of him, and to refer to him, and to make the messages of his love by Jesus Christ as familiar as a mother's accents of love to her child; may render his religious principle as strong and fervent. But the filial affection of the most devoted child in the land, might be chilled and destroyed, if he kept himself as little acquainted with his parents, as many men are with God. Learn wisdom from this example. Have not the folly to hope for the great end, except you devotedly pursue the prescribed means. It is these upon which God pours the blessing, and which shall guide us at last 'through faith unto salvation.'

DISCOURSE VI.

JESUS THE HIGH PRIEST.

HEBREWS ix. 26.

But now, once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

IT is observable of the manner in which the apostles speak of our Lord, that they seem anxious to accumulate expressions which shall evince their admiration and devotion. And in order to excite in others the same sentiments, they take care to select such language and illustrations, as shall convey to their minds the most favorable impressions concerning his excellence and dignity. These are consequently varied according to the previous opinions and habits of those whom they address; since that illustration which should ascribe to him the highest honor in the opinion of one, might be associated in the mind of another with very opposite feelings. This is only saying in other words, that they adapted themselves to the habits of thinking and state of mind of those whom they addressed. This is what Paul means when he says, 'that he became all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.' It was on this principle, that he strove to win the attention of the Athenians, by representing the God whom he would preach to them, not as a strange divinity, but as that 'Unknown God' whom they already worshipped; and that he quoted to them, in corroboration of his doctrine, the words of 'one of their own poets.'

It is upon this principle, also, that the epistle to the Hebrews is written. It is designed to conciliate the Jews to

the new religion, by exhibiting it in such lights and under such illustrations, as would render it to them most effective. In order to this, the author institutes a parallel between some portions of the Mosaic and the Christian institutions. The Jews would seem to have felt it as an objection to the doctrines of our Lord, that they threatened the abolition of the ancient ceremonials; and many, who could hardly doubt that he was the Christ, were yet ready to regard it as a deficiency in his system, that it provided no splendid temple, nor sanctuary, no sacrifices, nor priests, like the venerable faith which had been communicated to their fathers. To meet this very natural feeling among his countrymen, the apostle explains to them, that these things may be considered as existing in the Christian no less than in the Jewish dispensation. Heaven is a temple, and that part of it which is accounted the peculiar residence of God, may be called the sanctuary, or holy of holies. The death of Christ, considering its moral cause and purposes, may be deemed a sacrifice; and he himself, considering the design of his office, may be regarded as our high priest. And not only so, but it is a more splendid temple, a richer sacrifice, a greater high priest. He would thus make it appear, that the Mosaic religion had no advantage over the Christian in respect to ordinances; that, in truth, it had possessed only the shadow, of which the substance is in the gospel. Under the first covenant there was a tabernacle magnificently furnished, which he describes; under the second covenant there is 'a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands.' Into that, the high priest entered with the blood of beasts; so did Christ into this, with his own blood. Under that covenant, the sign of cleansing and pardon was 'the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean;' under this, it is the blood of Jesus Christ, 'who, through the eternal spirit, offered himself to God.' But the Jewish high priest offered for himself as well as for the people; Jesus is greater, who needs no offering for himself. The Jewish high priest offered every year; but Christ, only 'once, now, in the

end of the world, hath appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.'

Upon the parallel thus instituted by the apostle, two remarks may be made. First, it is observable, that in addressing the Hebrews, nothing could be more natural, or more likely to attract their regard to the new faith. It was illustrating the high dignity of our Lord, and the purpose of his office, in a manner conformable to their previous religious associations and habits. It thus adapted itself to their sacred prejudices, and prepared the way for the gradual removal of them. And secondly, as it was a mode of illustrating our Lord's character and office peculiarly suited to them; so it is one which—with the exception of a few incidental allusions, and the occasional occurrence of sacrificial terms—is never used except in reference to them, nor by any writer except the author of this epistle. To other nations, indeed, not familiar with the religious persons and institutions of the Mosaic law, this mode of illustration is difficult to be appreciated. After the best explanations it remains not a little obscure. This circumstance deserves to be considered, because it may convince us that the essence of our Lord's office does not consist in this form of representing it; since if it did, it would be the general form; and instead of being nearly confined to one epistle, would be in ordinary use among the apostles, and the title of high priest as familiar as that of Saviour. Jesus himself could not have passed through his whole ministry without alluding to it, nor the apostles have been utterly silent respecting it in their preaching, as from the book of Acts they appear to have been. We owe to it some of the most interesting and affecting views of our Lord's offices; but they never would have been given in the same form to any of the *Gentile* Christians, and cannot, therefore, as regards the form, be essential to their right apprehension. Our object must be to ascertain the great and leading truth couched beneath these representations; to separate what is essential from what is accidental, and take the substance rather than the form.

In order to this let us briefly examine the language of

the epistle, and show what inferences should be drawn from it for the direction of our faith and affections.

The apostle represents our Lord as holding the same place in the christian system which the high priest had maintained in the Jewish. He had already described him as sustaining the office of Mediator, like Moses in the previous dispensation; and now, that he may show how all honor is accumulated on him, and that he has a name above every name, he declares him to hold in the church forever that most sacred function and high place of government, which had formerly passed from one to another in the family of Aaron.

The high priest was the chief religious personage, or, as we may say, the head of the ancient church. He possessed a dignity of office and a sacredness of person to which none else approached. He had the supreme charge over all holy places, things, and services. He alone had permission to enter the most holy place, and that, only on the most solemn occasion and in the most imposing ceremony. To this high office there is no successor in the christian church, but Jesus Christ. He is the only rightful head, and such he continues forever.

The most remarkable circumstance in the duty of the high priest, to which especial reference is had in this epistle, was his entering once a year into the holy of holies to make atonement for the sins of the people. In this he was distinguished from the other priests, who might offer other sacrifices in the outer court, but might not enter the holiest place, nor participate in that peculiar rite. Upon that occasion he was first to make atonement for himself and his household, by burning incense before the mercy seat, and sprinkling the blood of the bullock seven times upon it and before it. He was then to slay a goat as a sin offering for the people, and in like manner to sprinkle the blood upon and before the mercy seat, and make an atonement for the holy place, for the tabernacle, for the altar, and for the people. He was then to take another goat, and laying his hands on its head, confess over it all the sins of the people, 'putting

them upon the head of the goat,' and then send him away into the wilderness, 'that he might bear away their sins into a land not inhabited.'*

This is the scene to which particular allusion is made in what is here said of the high priest's office. The essential point upon which stress is laid—for we are not to seek a parallel in every minute detail—may be found expressed in the words of our text. The object of that service, like that of our Lord's ministry, was 'to put away sin.' The high priest having entered the holiest place, with the blood of the sacrifice, put the sins of the people on the head of the goat, and sent them away. Jesus entered into heaven, says the apostle, with his own blood, and 'put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' The purpose is the same in both instances; and the means were so far similar, as that the shedding of blood is insisted upon in each. The inquiry therefore is suggested, in what sense are we to understand that sin is put away by the effusion of blood in sacrifices.

There are two senses in which sin may be said to be 'put away.' The first is the literal and absolute sense, when a man, having reformed and become righteous, is no longer a sinner. His sins are in the strictest sense put away, because in fact they no longer exist. The other is a figurative or ritual sense—when any one is, in certain circumstances, considered or treated as holy and free from sin, because of certain ritual formalities and conditions. In such case sin is said to be 'put away,' because in respect of ceremonial privileges and external religious advantages, the ill consequences and incapabilities of a sinful state are removed.

Now it is clearly in the latter sense only, that sins could be removed by the sacrifices of the Jewish law, and by the annual propitiation. By the sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat, the people were not actually made righteous, nor were their sins truly carried away by the scape goat into the desert. It was wholly a ceremonial and emblematical scene. It was an appointed sign of ceremonial

* Leviticus, xvi.

absolution. God, as the king of the people, had established this method of proclaiming from year to year, that they should be treated as free from sin, and be still favored as his peculiar people. Not because by this act they became sinless, nor because their transgressions were sufficiently punished in the sufferings of the bullock and the goats. For this same atonement was extended to the holy place, the altar, and the tabernacle. They were all purged by the same sacrifice, though they had been guilty of no sin. It could not therefore be designed as an actual purification of the people, but as emblematical merely. It could have no effect to change the mind of God in regard to them, or his dealings toward them; it could only manifest his propitious disposition, and proclaim his gracious forbearance.

Beneath all this however, there was doubtless couched a moral meaning and a moral lesson. It was all combined with positive instructions concerning duty and strongest prohibitions of vice. For the grosser sins no sacrifice was appointed; and none were availing, in any case, to actual pardon and acceptance, except the transgressor were penitent and reformed. The most explicit language on this point is frequent throughout the Old Testament. There was a spiritual meaning to these rights; but, like other acts of worship, they procured no spiritual blessings, except to the pious and obedient. To impress lessons of piety and obedience was one purpose of their institution; and this was very much effected by the character of clemency and readiness to forgive which they perpetually attributed to the Almighty; thus winning transgressors to repent, and encouraging the humble and distrustful to return to their duty. In this way a moral effect was the end at which they aimed, and which they had a tendency to produce. It was their final design, their legitimate result; leading, through the pomp and solemnity of an affecting and significant emblem, to contrition, and reformation, and the literal putting away of sin.

If we now turn to the office of the Christian high priest, we find that it was the whole purpose of his ministry, from first to last, 'to put away sin' in the strictest sense of

the terms; to bring men to repentance, to produce reformation and virtue, thus to cause them to 'be born again,' to render them 'new creatures,' to make them 'partakers of a divine nature.' This was the great end of all which he did and taught and suffered. It was the purpose of all his doctrines. It was the object and tendency of all his precepts. It was the aim of the sanctions of his religion. It was the chosen work of his life; the work, which he commissioned his Apostles to carry on, and established his church to maintain, throughout all ages. And wherever the gospel has been preached, this has been its distinguishing and glorious triumph. It has abolished, or at least weakened, the empire of sin; has rescued men from its power, taught them to hate its influence, and led them to seek for happiness in driving it from them and cultivating the holy spirit of virtue.

What was thus the one great purpose to be accomplished by the Messiah, toward effecting which all his offices and every part of his labor combined; was also the purpose to be accomplished in his sacrifice as high priest. It is a moral purpose; designed 'to put away sin,' not ritually, figuratively, but literally, absolutely; not by transfer of guilt, or substitution of another to suffer in place of the guilty, nor by any mystical spell which may change sin to innocence by a touch; but as a moral means, operating like other moral means, through the senses and affections, by emotion, sympathy, admiration, fear and love—persuading to penitence, devotion, and obedience. The death of Jesus, independent of his life, character, and labors, avails nothing; and connected with them, it operates as part of the great system of means which effects its purpose by a spiritual influence.

It is true, that a similar influence is ascribed to the sacrifice of our Lord, as to the sacrifices of the Jewish law. But what have we seen that to be? Not an actual, absolute, literal, cleansing from sin. This is no where pretended. The whole authority of the prophets is against it. The voice of this epistle is against it. 'It is not possible,' it says, 'that the blood of bulls and of goats should take

away sin.' It has no connexion with sin, nor power over it, nor influence over the divine mind in regard to it. Its efficacy consists in its being the appointed sign to men of the divine clemency and grace. As the blood of the passover lamb upon the door posts was 'a token' to the inhabitants of the house, that they should be saved; so the blood of all the sacrifices was a 'token,' or sign, that God's mercy was extended toward them. He had annexed to it this signification. And just so when he delivered his Son to death, it was for a *sign*—the most convincing and satisfactory which could be given—of his inexhaustible mercy, of his willingness to forgive and save; a sign, that as 'he did not spare his own Son, so he was ready with him freely to give us all things.' It was therefore well called a 'sacrifice.' It signified, what the Jewish sacrifices signified; that God, holy as he is, and abhorring all iniquity, is yet plenteous in redemption and ready to forgive; that he is waiting to be gracious, and encourages his prodigal children to return; that he is ready to enter with them into a new covenant, and allow them henceforth a new opportunity of approving themselves to him.

Such is its resemblance to the sacrifices of the ancient covenant; a resemblance, which evidently does nothing to destroy the moral nature of the influence it exerts. Those availed in ritual blemishes by a positive ritual appointment; but in regard to moral guilt, only by their power to impress the mind, and move to penitence and holiness. And who is not aware that precisely in this mode the blood of Jesus avails to the cleansing and salvation of man? Who pretends that it shall reconcile to God, except through the faith, repentance, and obedience which it produces? that it shall bring to him any heart, which does not come with its own affections? any soul, which does not surrender itself to his love and law? And who does not know that in the impression of that scene, in the affecting and pathetic circumstances under which the Lord of glory was devoted to the cross, there is that which is peculiarly suited to touch the sensibility of the soul, to awaken the sleeping conscience, to rouse to admiration, wonder and love to grati-

tude, remorse, and repentance? Who can know that all this suffering was needful to establish the new dispensation of grace, and effect the removal of sin, and lead men to heaven;—without being profoundly impressed with a sense of the evil of sin, and the riches of the divine compassion? Who that allows himself to reflect and feel, can look unmoved on the token of his mercy which God has there given, or the sign of his grace which he has there displayed? It reminds him of the horrible evil of sin, which brought the Saviour into the world to suffer and die; of the placability of the Father, who provides for the return and acceptance of his children, and 'reconciles the world to himself, not imputing their transgressions to them;' and of the aggravated guilt which they must incur, who should harden their hearts against all this mercy, and continue in sin while grace thus abounds. He acknowledges the power of the cross; he bends before the persuasive entreaties of the Saviour's sufferings; and turns to God with his whole heart. Herein is the power of the sacrifice—it has effectually put away his sins, and saved his soul.

That there is no other efficacy in our Lord's sufferings, except in the mode which has now been described, I do not assert. But thus much is clear—that this is the only operation which we can understand, or with which we can perceive that man has any practical concern. In the mind and counsels of God, there may be consequences which we do not discern and cannot penetrate. An importance is plainly attributed to the Messiah's death in the Scriptures, which is ascribed to that of no other person. It is spoken of with peculiar emphasis and feeling, and is connected in a peculiar manner with the terms of pardon and life. We may therefore be certain that it holds a most important place in the christian scheme, that we owe to it, perhaps, much more than we can at present know, far more than we can distinctly apprehend. But what we can apprehend, what we do understand, should be enough to satisfy us. 'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God;' it is not for us curiously to pry into them, nor should we perhaps be made better if we could discover them.

What God has been pleased to reveal, is enough for our gratitude, guidance, and peace. True humility will be content with this, and not ambitiously seek to explain what the Scriptures have not explained. If we can discern the powerful moral operation by which our Lord's death convinces men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and sanctifies their souls; it is enough, or more would have been told. Let us be content to rest in humble ignorance of whatever mysterious purposes may be otherwise effected, and fear lest our solicitude to know more should destroy the practical and saving influence of what is already certain.

But besides the view of our Lord's character as high priest which we have now taken, there is yet another, on which this epistle dwells with still stronger emphasis and pleasure—and that is, his personal character, as exhibiting in its traits of benevolent sympathy and tenderness, a pledge of the placability and grace of God, and an encouragement to the frailty and apprehensions of man. There are few portions of scripture more delightful than these to the penitent, timorous, self-distrusting believer. The power of persuasive and pathetic language is almost exhausted in describing the compassion of our great high priest, and in setting forth the comfort and animation, which his example and sufferings should impart. Even the Jewish ritual had taught that God is not inexorable, but willing to forgive. But in the character and labors, the tenderness and sufferings of Jesus, it is yet more touchingly exhibited. Here he invites us with a voice of kindness, and cheers us with the countenance of love. We may come no longer in abject fear and servile dread, 'like slaves beneath the throne; but boldly;' 'for we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; and having himself suffered, being tempted, is able to succor those who are tempted;' 'who is able also to save those to the uttermost who come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

What shall we add to this language of the scriptures? It speaks more plainly than we can express, and with an au-

thority which we should not dare assume, of the abounding grace of God, as confirmed to us by the ministry and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us rejoice in it. Let us strive to be worthy of it. Let us surrender to it our faith, our trust, our affections. For where will be our apology or our hope, if, unmoved by this rich and wonderful abundance of invitation, compassion, and aid, we should suffer ourselves to be strangers to his love, aliens from his presence, rebels against his law! if we should be found capable of thus trampling under foot the Son of God, and doing despite to the spirit of grace, and counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith we are sanctified, an unholy thing!

DISCOURSE VII.

THE ATONEMENT BY JESUS CHRIST.

ROMANS V. 11.

And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

THE apostle, in the preceding part of this epistle, has employed himself in showing, that Jew as well as Gentile is to be saved by the grace of God; that therefore the boasting of the Jew in his law is vain; and that the Gentile cannot be required to conform to that law, in order to his admission to the Christian dispensation. In this he had reference to the great controversy of the age. The Jews, glorying in their exclusive privileges as the people of God, insisted that there could be no favor to the Gentiles, except through a previous initiation to their church. Paul, on the other hand, contended strenuously for the rights of the Gentiles, independently of the Mosaic institutions. He asserted that God was in Christ introducing a new dispensation of grace for all men, in which they might freely partake without first passing through the ceremonials of the former faith.

Having thus cut off from the Jews their favorite ground of boasting, and showed the title of the Gentile believers to be as good as theirs; the apostle begins the present

chapter with exhibiting the causes of rejoicing which pertain to the Gentile christians.

The first is *the hope of glory*, to which the grace of God has introduced them, and to which they had been previously strangers. The second is, *their sufferings for the gospel's sake*—'we glory in tribulations also'—because they lead to increased attainments in the spirit and virtues of religion, and thus prepare the way for its peace and bliss. The third is their relation to God as their God; *we joy in God;* this they could not do formerly, as being Gentiles, who had not the true knowledge of God, and were not admitted to the privileges of his people; but now, being brought nigh in the establishment of the new covenant 'we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.'

It is the third ground of the believer's glorying, or joy, which forms the text of our discourse. In considering this, we find four topics of remark.

1. The meaning of the word *atonement* as here used.
2. The persons who receive this atonement.
3. The mode in which it is received.
4. The joy occasioned by its reception.

I. We are to speak of the meaning of the word Atonement.

Here it is to be observed, first of all, that this is the only place in the New Testament in which the word occurs. It is not again used in the christian scriptures by any writer, in any connexion, in relation to any subject. It is never used in relation to the terms of pardon, or acceptance with God, to explain the ground of the sinner's hope, or to illustrate any of the works or offices of Christ; neither in relation to his life, his doctrines, his sufferings, or his death. This is a fact of which we should be thoroughly aware; that the writers of the New Testament, throughout that volume, have never found occasion to introduce the word atonement. We meet with it nowhere except in our text.

In the next place it is to be remarked, that as occurring in this passage, it is universally acknowledged to be a clear and unquestionable mistranslation of the original word. In

every other case in which the same word occurs it is rendered *reconciliation;* as when the apostle says, 'he hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation.' So it should have been rendered here. Doddridge remarks, that it has so evident reference to the word *reconciled* in the context, that 'it is surprising it should have been rendered by so different a word in our version.'* Other commentators speak to the same effect.

A single glance at the connexion in which the text stands will satisfy us that this interpretation is necessary to the sense of the passage. For there is an obvious allusion to the language of the verse immediately preceding. 'If,' says the apostle, 'when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' Then follows our text, in which he declares that those who are thus *reconciled*, 'rejoice in God through Jesus Christ, by whom they have received *this reconciliation*.'

A glance at the word Atonement itself, may also convince us that the true meaning is *Reconciliation*. The remark has been made, and may be profitably repeated,† that *to atone*, in its primary use, signified *to reconcile*. It is formed by the union of the two words, *at* and *one*. Persons who have once differed, on being reconciled, are set *at one*. To put *at one*, or to *at-one*, is originally to *reconcile;* consequently *atonement* is *reconciliation*. This we know to have been the signification of the word as it was used at the period when our translation of the Bible was made; it was undoubtedly the meaning attached to it by the translators.

Let us remember then, that the word 'atonement,' in the only instance in which it is found in the New Testament, is the same with 'reconciliation.' But what is to be understood by reconciliation?

To answer this will require few words; for it is the com-

* Family Expositor, in loc. note.

† See especially Dr Ware's *Letters to Trinitarians and Calvinists*. Letter V. p. 95.

prehensive term which expresses, in one view of the subject, the entire purpose of the Saviour's mission. The world was estranged from God, worshipping false divinities, and pursuing evil practices. Its inhabitants had wandered from God, and were 'aliens,' 'afar off.' He sent his Son to bring them near, to acquaint them with his character, to restore them to their allegiance, to make them his friends, and thus, in one word, to reconcile them. Hence the apostle calls the ministry of the gospel the ministry of 'reconciliation;' because 'God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' This he represents to be the burden of the message with which the preachers of the word are charged—'we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.'

Thus much respecting the signification of this important word. We proceed to consider,

II. Who are said to receive the atonement.

The idea conveyed by this language of the sacred writers, is that of two parties at variance. There is an alienation between God and his people. A reconciliation is to take place. Which party is to receive it? Which party makes, and which receives the offers of peace?

The answer to this will depend upon the reply to a previous question. Which party is at variance, which at enmity? Is God at variance with his children, or they with him? has he forsaken them, or have they forsaken him? is he the enemy of men, or are they the enemies of God? The reply to this question is ready upon every heart and tongue. God has never estranged himself from men, nor forsaken them, nor been their enemy. 'He has hated nothing which he has made.' His name is Love; and in long suffering love he has forborne them and been patient with them, pitied them as a Father his children, showered down mercy, and made punishment his strange work. The history of the world bears testimony that he has never ceased to be gracious; and that if there have been any separation between him and his human family, it has taken place on the part of his wayward offspring. They have

neglected and forgotten him; they have been thankless and disobedient. They have disliked his law, been impatient beneath the restraint of his government, and unwilling to retain him in their knowledge. The alienation was entirely on their part; it is their enmity which is to be subdued and forgiven, and it is they therefore who are to receive the reconciliation.

With this statement the Scriptures perfectly accord. The aspect of all the dispensations is that of God's love. His infinite and unchangeable benignity, his free and unfailing mercy, shine conspicuously in all. They do not exhibit him as a stern avenger, an inexorable sovereign, a God of terror and wrath; but as gracious and merciful, plenteous in redemption, full of compassion. The enemy of sin, indeed, and sometimes displaying his indignant displeasure in works of severity and destruction; but long suffering toward the guilty, and not desirous that any should perish. Notwithstanding the sins of man, he so *loved* the world, that he sent his Son to save it. 'He magnified his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' He did not need to be rendered propitious, to be persuaded to extend favor to man; for he was already waiting to be gracious, the hand of forgiveness was already stretched out. It was men, who needed to be induced to seek forgiveness. They had set themselves afar off, and needed to be persuaded to come near. And therefore the language of scripture is, 'God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself;' not, himself to the world.

It is sometimes thought, that God receives the atonement; that it is a means used to reconcile Him to the world, and to persuade or enable him to grant pardon and favor, which otherwise he might be indisposed or unable to bestow. But the uniform representation of scripture certainly is, that this atonement flows from his grace, not that his grace is the consequence of the atonement; that He sent his Son to live and suffer for the salvation of men, not that the Son lived and suffered in order to win the good will of God toward them. It would be dishonorable to

our heavenly father, to suppose any other one to have more compassion than he, and to be the first in devising and prosecuting a plan for human redemption. The scripture expressly speaks of reconciling men to God, never of reconciling God to men. Let us adhere to this important distinction. Let us receive with grateful emotions this plain statement of God's inherent and essential grace. Let us neither question it, by ascribing it to the previous labors of one more gracious than himself, nor abuse it by ungrateful continuance in rebellious sin.

III. The next observation to be drawn from our text, relates to the mode in which this atonement, or reconciliation, is received: 'through Jesus Christ.' He is the medium through which are communicated all the purposes and revelations of God. He is the messenger by whom are made known the kind purposes of the Father toward his children, and by whom is preached 'peace to those who are afar off and to those who are nigh.' He came, commissioned with all the authority and power, all the wisdom and holiness, that should be necessary to convince, and persuade, and win men to their allegiance to God. And by employing all these powers, by exercising all these gifts, by establishing a new dispensation, by his instructions, doctrine, and example, by his life and sufferings, his labors and death,—he did all that was needful to teach men the way of return, and lead them back to God.

Especially were the anguish and patience of his final sufferings, and his fearful death upon the cross, appointed and powerful means of affecting the souls of men, and restoring them to the love of duty and of God. To this portion of his ministration, therefore the work of reconciliation is frequently attributed. 'He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' 'He made peace by his cross.' He thus exhibited the earnest desire of our heavenly Father to reclaim his wandering children to the ways of pleasantness and peace. He thus exhibited a spectacle, which none can contemplate without emotion; which thousands have thought upon and wept—wept those tears of sorrow and contrition which have issued in repent-

ance, and been led, humble and suppliant, to the footstool of God's mercy, and thence upward in the path to heaven. What multitudes have thus felt the power of this reconciling grace! They have cast the burden of their sins at the foot of the cross, and, in the strong figure of the Apocalypse, have 'washed their garments, and made them white, in the blood of the lamb.'

IV. We were to speak, lastly, of the joy or glorying occasioned by this doctrine in the mind of the believer.

Here let us go back, and observe the state of feeling in the apostle's own mind. He had been setting aside the boasting of the Jews in their peculiar privileges as God's chosen people, and proving that they had no reason to exclude or despise the Gentiles. And now, in the name of the Gentiles, he is bringing forward the grounds of *their* religious boasting. The select nation can no longer glory in God as their peculiar divinity. Once indeed it was so, and we Gentiles were aliens and strangers; but now, we also are brought near and called into his family; we also are partakers of his revealed religion, and the hope of his glory; we, therefore, as well as they, may 'joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have *now* received reconciliation.' The apostle was thinking of the general fact, which was so frequently the theme of his preaching and epistles, and to establish which he so anxiously labored; the fact, that in the gospel, the distinction between Jew and Gentile was abolished, the middle walls of partition thrown down, and all nations placed in a state of reconciliation;—that general fact, to which most of the passages refer which speak of the world being reconciled and redeemed by the ministry and death of Jesus Christ. When the apostle contemplated this glorious truth, which evinced the equal and impartial mercy of the universal parent, no wonder that his heart was enlarged, and that he spake of it here and elsewhere in ardent accents of joy and triumph.

It should be equally matter of religious rejoicing to us. To see the diffusion of an impartial and universal religion, which gives one light and one hope to all the sons of men,

which brings every nation and kindred and tongue into an equal state of favor, which collects in one the family in heaven and on earth, and unites it under one name; how shall we not triumph and rejoice in this great and sublime truth, this mystery, as the apostle calls it, 'which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest to all nations.'

There is not only reason for joy in this general sense, but in a particular and personal sense. For by this gracious method of reconciliation we are, individually, put in the condition to be pardoned, accepted, and saved; individually introduced to a participation of the highest privileges which God has bestowed on his children upon earth, and of the most glorious hopes which he has opened to them in heaven. We have each of us, personally, been taken from that state in which our fathers were once exposed, 'without God and without hope,' and made to 'sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' If we have any right sense of our privileges this will be reason for joy indeed;—joy, that the highway of life is opened before us, and that nothing may hinder us from glory, honor, and immortality, if we be but faithful to ourselves; joy, in God, who has thus manifested his divine love, and not suffered even our sins to separate us from his mercy. To him then be our gratitude given. 'All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.' Of his own voluntary and unsolicited grace, unmoved, except by the inherent and immutable benignity of his own nature, he sent his Son to bestow on us that light, to secure for us those advantages, to establish for us those means, by which pardon and life may be ours; to toil for us, that we might be free, to die for us, that we might live. To him, therefore, be our gratitude and praise; in him be our joy; in him, as our God and Father, be our trust and hope.

Such is the doctrine of our text and of the New Testament. Thus is it calculated to excite gratitude to our heavenly Father, and heighten our devotion.

DISCOURSE VIII.

JESUS THE INTERCESSOR.

ROMANS viii. 34.

It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

THIS is one of the only two passages in the New Testament, which speak of Jesus as making intercession. In what this intercession consists, we are nowhere distinctly told. The passage before us does not describe it, and the other passage in Hebrews [vii. 25] speaks of it only in a general and figurative adaptation of a ceremonial observance of the Mosaic ritual. This consisted in the sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat, upon the annual day of propitiation. In conformity with this, some have been fond of representing the intercession of Jesus, as the sprinkling of his blood before the throne of God in heaven. But this is to speak without any distinct sense; for we know that there is no material throne in heaven, and that he did not strictly bear thither the blood which flowed upon the cross. It is but a strong figure, which needs to be explained.

Others suppose it to signify simply the presenting of his humanity, (as they term it,) that is, his ascended human body, before God, to remind him, by its presence, of his gracious promises to men, and of what had been suffered

for them. They suppose this perpetual exhibition of the body in which he suffered, to be the essence of that intercession which he makes for his church.

Others suppose it to consist in his perpetually pleading his merits before God, and claiming the reward of his obedience and death, in the salvation of the saints.

It is not necessary to discuss all, or either, of these opinions. They are merely inferences from single undefined expressions, like that of our text, and may seem to be more or less plausible, according to the general notions of that religious system which any one may have adopted.

Let us then pass by these, and examine the subject for ourselves.

To intercede or to make intercession, signifies to interpose in behalf of another, to some third person, who has power to show him favor. This may be done either by action or by word. Whatever therefore our Lord has done, by his life, death, labors, or prayers, in behalf of man, may be considered as part of his intercessory office.

For by all these, he stepped in, like Aaron with the censer to stay the plague, between man and ruin, and by all helped forward his salvation. It is consequently supposed by many, that this language is only a general expression to signify, that he 'exercises kind offices' in behalf of men. In this case, however, it is plain, that intercession would be precisely the same thing as the exercise of his mediatorial office. All the services, which Christ has rendered man, are done by him as mediator. That office comprehends every exercise of his love, every display of his benevolence, every effort to extend salvation. Intercession should be regarded as one of these modes of exertion, rather than as all. Even if it were allowable to consider the term as including all his kind offices toward man, or as an indefinite phrase to signify whatever it may be which he does for man in his exalted state; yet it may be more strictly exact to understand it as intending intercession by prayer. This seems to be the more usual sense of the word, both in our own language, and in that of the original scriptures.

The doctrine then seems to be, that our blessed Lord, who poured out his prayers as well as his life for men, when on earth; forgets not in his exalted state also, to seek their benefit by his prayers; and thus to express the interest, which he still takes in that race for which he labored and died.

It will be my object to illustrate the truth of this doctrine, to clear it from objection, to explain its purposes, and unfold its uses.

1. We may remark, in the first place—that Jesus should be engaged in such an office, is perfectly consonant to all that we know of the mode of the divine administration, and to all that we understand of the method of God's operations in the universe. He has every where established a uniform system of mutual dependence. Nothing stands by itself. No being exists alone. All lean upon each other. Every individual is made to help others, and to receive help from others. It is a large, comprehensive arrangement of beneficence; in which God's kind purposes are effected by causing his creatures to do kind offices to one another. The very worlds which roll through space, are dependent on each other, and influence each other. Men are dependent on one another for existence and for happiness. The parent and child, the teacher and pupil, the ruler and subject, the rich and poor, all are needful to each other. And look where we may, every thing and every being seems made, not for itself only, but for the benefit of others also.

The intercessory office of Jesus may be regarded as part of this wide spread and all-embracing system. Agreeably to this universal law of kindness, God has appointed, that his children on earth shall receive favor and blessing through the various instrumentality of his dear Son. It is his favorite procedure to bestow his gifts by means of intermediate agents; to withdraw himself, as it were, from immediate action and observation, that he may exercise the virtues and good affections of his children on one another. Thus in the present instance, he would multiply the objects of their affection and gratitude, by appointing that favors shall

be conveyed to them through the intercession of their Saviour.

This is also conformable to the method of his providence and grace as recorded in the scriptures. The frequent examples of prevalent intercession, both in the Old and New Testaments, prove to us, that this is one of the means by which God has appointed to dispense blessing. When the destruction of Sodom was threatened, how did his condescending mercy listen to the importunate pleading of Abraham, and promise to spare at his entreaty. When the people of Israel had rebelliously sinned, how often were they forgiven and their punishment delayed, at the interposition of Moses. So too the prayers of David and Samuel, of Elisha and Solomon were acceptable, and the offending friends of Job were pardoned at his intervention. And when the people had transgressed beyond mercy in the days of Jeremiah, the prophet was commanded, as the most decided expression of God's displeasure, 'therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee.'

The authority of the New Testament is even more decisive than that of the Old. The principle of acceptable intercession is very frequently recognized. Christians are commanded to pray for one another. The apostles request the brethren to pray for them, and they offer their own prayers for the brethren. Paul directs that 'intercessions be made for all men.' 'Confess your faults one to another,' says James, 'and pray for one another. The prayer of faith shall heal the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.' Paul earnestly prays in behalf of his countrymen, and often assures the churches to which he writes, that he never forgets them in his addresses at the throne of grace.

It thus appears, that, among the good services which men are made to render to one another, this of intercession stands prominent and conspicuous. As they are bound to 'do good as they have opportunity,' so they are taught that they have an opportunity, whenever they hold communion with their heavenly Father.

If it be so with all; if every righteous man have this privilege; if the ear of the Almighty be thus open to the

cry of every benevolent heart; how much more must it be so to the voice of his chosen, his anointed, his dearly beloved Son? If this be a means of cultivating benevolence and dispensing favor in the hands of all his children, how peculiarly must it be so in *his* hands, to whom the great work of love was appointed, and whose desire of man's happiness is so earnest and extensive? How must his heart, overflowing with that love which passeth knowledge, delight to pour itself out before the seat of his Father's mercy, in petitions of grace for the erring, of pardon for the penitent, of strength for the weak, of aid for the tempted! How must he delight to add to all other demonstrations of interest in their souls' well-being, this of a tender recollection of them in his prayers!

Consider how it was during his residence upon earth. Several of his prayers are recorded in the gospels, and among them are prayers of intercession. 'The enemy hath desired you,' said he to Peter, 'that he may sift you as wheat; and I have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith may not fail.' He prayed particularly for Peter, because his ardor and rashness exposed him to especial peril. When stretched upon the cross, he prayed for his enemies; and before that scene of suffering began, he poured out his soul in the most affectionate strain of supplication for his chosen disciples. This, his longest, his most striking act of devotion, was almost exclusively an act of intercession. He appeared as their advocate before the Father. He pleaded for them with earnest and profound feeling; appearing to concentrate the whole strength and tenderness of his disinterested love, in this official act of friendly intercession.

Will any one suppose, that his ardent devotion to the interests of his followers and the church, expired when he left them in the world? that he no longer cared for them, when he had ascended from their sight, nor took concern in their improvement, purity, and peace? Or will any one imagine, that he no longer possessed the privilege of interceding with his Father? that when risen to his glory, the liberty and efficacy of this benevolent act were taken from him? It cannot be. It were not possible that he should

have changed his feelings, and lost his solicitude for that work in which he had lived and died, suffered and triumphed, been humbled and glorified. Neither could it be possible, that he, who watched over and instructed his growing church, and sought for it God's choice blessing, to the very moment when the cloud received him from human sight; should, from that moment, have ceased to plead its cause in the presence of that God to whom he had ascended.

The representations of the New Testament confirm this idea. It is very evident from them, that during the apostolic age—that is, until the destruction of Jerusalem, and the extinction of the Jewish polity—our Lord did continue to manifest an active and personal interest in the concerns of his followers and the prosperity of his church. 'Lo, I am with you always,' said he, 'even unto the end of the world;' by which we understand, what the term so frequently means in the christian scriptures, the end of the Jewish world, the close of the Jewish age, or dispensation. That this promise was fulfilled by his actual, occasional presence with them, is manifest from several passages. He appeared personally to Paul for his conversion. He seems afterwards to have appeared to him on other occasions. And there are frequent intimations, that the disciples received from him direction and council, in a manner wholly unknown in later times, after the infant church had obtained a firm footing in the world. All the aid which he thus vouchsafed to his struggling and suffering followers, was in furtherance of that magnificent design to which he had devoted himself. And can we then suppose, that it ceased to hold a place in his near and unceasing communion with God? Is it not most consistent and reasonable to believe, that he, who had so magnanimously consecrated himself to this holy cause, and been its advocate in one sphere, should continue to be its advocate in another sphere? Is it not most agreeable to all our conceptions of the benevolence and devotion of Jesus, to believe that the apostle states the literal fact when he says in our text, that he, who died for us, and rose again, and is at God's right hand, also makes

intercession for us? Should we not expect to find, that as he 'ever lives,' so he 'ever makes intercession?'

Still, however, objections may arise to the doctrine thus stated. Some of these it was our second purpose to consider.

II. 1. The first objection which occurs to me as likely to be made to these statements, arises from a general feeling of incredulity in regard to what does not come within the limits of actual personal knowledge. We are not easily brought to conceive, that the employment of beings in the invisible world can have any near connexion with us, or our lot be a matter of knowledge or interest to them. And hence we are inclined to receive with a certain hesitating incredulity, the idea that Jesus intercedes for us in heaven.

This seems to me to be owing to our too much dividing this world in our thoughts from the coming state. We are so engrossed with present things, that we regard the visible and invisible states, not only as separate, but altogether distinct and unconnected. This is doubtless an error; and the removal of this, would remove all difficulty on this account—a difficulty arising from false associations of feeling, rather than from any well-grounded reason.

For we are to reflect, that, in truth, the connexion between these states is most real and intimate, the one being a continuation of the life commenced in the other. Now there is this essential difference between the condition of us who remain upon earth, and the spirits of those who have departed to the unseen state. Their condition we have never experienced nor witnessed; and therefore we cannot fully understand its character nor sympathise in it. It is to us the untravelled region of imagination and hope, of which we have heard that it is, but have not seen what it is. But with our condition, they, on the contrary, are familiarly acquainted; they have once taken part in it; they know the feelings, the employments, the exposures, the pleasures, the trials of earthly existence; they can enter into all the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, anxieties and raptures of their friends below. Although, therefore, we, from our inexperience and ignorance, may seem to be utterly discon-

nected from them, and from all concern or sympathy with them; yet they, who have been so recently dwellers upon earth, must still feel that they are not wholly severed from us. They must still have a lively recollection of what passed and affected them in this important abode of their probation; must still take an interest in the scenes and the friends which they have left; must be desirous to promote if possible their welfare, and anxious to avert from them evil. It is as if they had gone to a distant continent, whence their hearts still run back to family and home, and rejoice in tidings from the land that they loved.

We cannot view this matter differently, unless we suppose, either that the memory of this first period of life is blotted out from the soul at death; or else that the affections are so changed as to become at once indifferent to all that they knew and cherished here. But we cannot indulge either supposition. Every thing that is taught us respecting a future life gives the assurance, that there is a close connexion between that and the present; that that, in truth, is a direct continuance of this; linked intimately to it by the consequences of action and character which follow from this world to that. There can then be no obliteration of the memory. To a state of retribution the recollection of the past state of duty is essential. For there could be no just punishment of sins of which the sufferer is not in some sense conscious, and no righteous recompence of services which are not in some sense remembered. Besides, it is plain that nothing but an express and arbitrary act of omnipotence could blot the memory of past existence from the soul—an act, which we have not the slightest reason or authority to warrant us in supposing.

Neither have we any ground for supposing any supernatural change in the affections at that moment. Man, risen from death, is still man—the same man, so far as regards his character, feelings, and affections, that he was when he fell asleep. If these be not the same, his personal identity is gone. Admitted to the joys of heaven, he still must be conscious that he has just quitted the society of earth, and must have a desire that those whom he loved below should

be united with him above—a desire stronger than ever, we should think, because heightened by an actual sense of heavenly felicity. If our Saviour represents the selfish rich man, as anxious, that his brethren might not come to the same place of torment; how reasonable to suppose that the good —who were less selfish and more attached to their earthly friends,—should be solicitous that those friends should come to the same place of bliss; and, though they might not be able to send them a messenger from Abraham's bosom, yet should seek, by prayer at least, to obtain for them the blessing.

There is therefore no good reason for that distinction of interests, which we are so apt to imagine placed between the two states. We deceive ourselves, because we have never experienced the nearness of the connexion. We should reflect that the inmates of the other world have experienced it. If we would in imagination exchange places with them, and consider with what feelings we should look back upon this spot of our infant being; we should understand how close is the tie which binds together the invisible and visible worlds, and how strongly it is felt by them, though so little realized by us. We should be persuaded, that their thoughts and affections still run back to former scenes and friends, and that the prayers of heaven, where angels rejoice over penitent sinners, do not forget to mention the friends of earth. We then, instead of the cold incredulous assent which we now give to the doctrine of Christ's intercession, should feel that nothing could be more natural, or more agreeable to his character and office. If our fellow-men carry with them the recollections of earth, and the desire to benefit their friends; how much more must He, the whole object of whose life was to fit men for that world; who left upon earth a mighty work but just commenced; who left the church he had just founded struggling for its existence, and the dearest desires of whose heart can be accomplished only by its growth and prosperity. The work which he begun is still going on, as important, as interesting, as glorious, as ever. He cannot be separated from it. However others might be able to

forget all their labors and objects of interest on earth, it cannot be so with the Messiah; for heaven and eternity are interested in them. However to others the two states might become distinct and separate, to him they could never be so. For what his truth has begun to effect here, is going on to its completion there. It is only by knowing its whole progress, that he can 'see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.' He cannot cease to care for it, to be engaged for it, and to speak of it in the everlasting communion which he holds with his Father. He cannot be unconcerned for any spirit here, which he hopes to welcome to glory there.

2. Another objection to this doctrine may be, that no consequences are discernible. If Jesus were truly interceding for men, we should perceive its effects in their conversion and subjection to him. His religion would not be so slighted, its extension would not be so limited. But as it has spread so imperfectly, and so many who have received are yet so little affected by it, it is not easy to believe that Jesus has been actually employing so efficient means.

This objection proceeds upon the supposition, that the intercession of the Mediator must necessarily be all-prevailing; that such must of course be its virtue, as to occasion at once the perfect accomplishment of his great work. But we have no authority for such a supposition. It is without sufficient reason or warrant, that we fancy the Deity pledged to grant immediately, unreservedly, and perceptibly, the petitions of the intercessor.

It is true, when our Lord uttered his prayer at the tomb of Lazarus, he said, 'I know that thou hearest me always.' He had asked for permission to exercise his power in raising his friend from the dead, and he gave thanks that it was granted; 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.' But this, it is plain, refers only to his power of working miracles on earth. And it must be observed, that there is a great difference between such operations on the bodies of men, and the influence of religion on their souls. The souls of men are subject only to a *moral* influence. There can be no reformation or holiness by compulsion. Reformation

and holiness come only through the operation of truth, by motive, argument, persuasion. These are the means which God has established in the world, and which Jesus came to bring. And if his intercession should have the effect to work a miracle in every heart, it would be to supercede at once, and render useless, all those extensive means, which, with so great pains and cost, have been instituted for man's salvation. But it plainly cannot be designed to interfere with and frustrate, but only to aid, that vast and gracious system; and therefore this objection—which simply amounts to this, that it has not overturned the whole provision of moral means in the christian dispensation—is entirely destitute of weight.

Indeed the objection might be urged quite as plausibly against the whole system of revelation itself. It is an obvious fact, that revelation does not accomplish the whole of that extensive good, which it was designed to effect. The gospel was sent into the world to abolish the empire of sin, and establish the prevalence of holiness. Yet it has never done it. The dominion of sin is still powerful and extensive, and multitudes live and die without righteousness or religion. This is true even of the christian world; how much more true of the whole world! Now we might quite as safely reason, that the gospel has not been announced, because we do not witness its promised perfect operation, as that Jesus does not intercede, because we do not witness what we should suppose to be the complete efficacy of such intercession. The truth is, that nothing at present has its full and perfect effect. Every thing is in tendency, rather than in result. The design and tendency of the government of providence are to happiness; yet there is a great deal of unhappiness. But this unhappiness is no objection to a thoughtful mind against the benevolent tendency of the system.

Besides; the objection we are considering adopts the very inadmissable supposition, that we are acquainted with all the results of our Lord's intercessory labors; that we actually know how far they avail, and where they cease to avail. Whereas, in truth, we know nothing about it, and can know nothing. How can we tell that many favors and

deliverances, which we least suspect, and of whose existence even we know nothing, are not owing to this very circumstance? How can we tell, if this were to cease, what would be the diminution of the general influence of religion, and of its peace and joy in our own breasts? From the nature of the case, we must necessarily be profoundly ignorant in regard to all particulars. It is much the same as in regard to the efficacy of prayer. We know that it avails, that 'the fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man avails much.' But who can tell in precisely what instances and to what extent? We have the public institutions and ordinances of our faith operating in the midst of us, and within the sphere of our constant observation. Yet we are wholly unable to estimate the extent and determine the limits of their influence. Many persons profess that they are unable to discern in it any degree. It were therefore to be expected that the operation of our Lord's intercession would be imperceptible. It might be great and powerful, and yet we be altogether unable to detect it.

3. Another objection to the doctrine may be that it operates against the character of the Supreme Father. It seems to imply, that he is less disposed to show favor to his children, and that he needs to be solicited and persuaded by some being more benevolent than himself.

This objection is grounded entirely in misapprehension; as will be evident from considering, what I proposed as the third head of discourse,

III. The purpose to be answered by the intercession of Jesus.

The objection just named supposes this purpose to be, to change the dispositions of God from wrath to favor, and render him willing, or induce him, to be kind to his offspring. Now if this were the purpose, the objection would be insuperable against the doctrine, since it would contradict the whole testimony of the scriptures concerning the character of God. For although his displeasure against sin is unquestionable and severe, yet nothing is more certain than that his disposition toward his creatures is that of a Father—is love, grace, antecedent to any solicitation, independent of all ex-

ternal causes. The objection is indeed valid against any notion of intercession or mediation, which should attribute to it the production of such a disposition; which should suppose, for example, a perpetual contest going on between Jesus the Advocate, and God the Judge, in which the one insists on the extreme penalty of the law, and the other pleads, that having already endured it himself, it should not be again visited on the offenders. Or such views as are sometimes given by Watts in his hymns:

> Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood,
> That calm'd God's frowning face;
> That sprinkled o'er the burning throne,
> And turn'd the wrath to grace.

But the doctrine, which I have stated, is not liable to the objection which rightfully lies against such representations as this. It ascribes no such purpose to the work of Christ, for it does not admit any such to be needed. It stands on the same foundation with the doctrine of prayer. It presupposes that God is gracious, does not undertake to render him so. It is the appointed means, by which his grace, already abundant and active, is sought and bestowed. If I beseech God to grant a daily blessing, it is not because I imagine him indisposed to bestow it, and needing to be persuaded to do it; but for just the contrary reason, that he is disposed; and it is suitable and becoming in me, dependent as I am, to apply to him, acknowledging my dependence and need; besides that he has commanded it, as a means of obtaining blessing. So also if I offer petitions in behalf of a friend, it is for the very reason that I know God to be disposed to bless, and to have appointed this as one means of procuring favor. It is suitable too and becoming, that his children should in this way express and exercise their good feelings toward each other. It is part of that vast connected system of benevolence and mutual improvement, which has already been referred to. We regard our Lord's intercession as a part of the same system. He appears at the throne of grace in behalf of his friends—not because God needs to be entreated and rendered willing to grant blessing; but because,

already waiting to be gracious, he has appointed this method of dispensing blessing. It is also suitable and becoming, that he, who is the head of the church, and whom God sent to 'lead many sons to glory,' should in this way express his care for them, and his interest in them, and be the means of procuring for them that felicity, for which he labored and died.

Precisely what we owe to it, the exact nature and extent of the aid, strength, favor, which may be thus communicated to believers, it is not possible for us to know. But that it is something real and great, we have no right to doubt. We cannot precisely ascertain how much or what we owe to our prayers, or wherein human intercessions avail. The christian poet has said, speaking of the humble piety of the retired man, who lives unheeded by the world—

> Perhaps she owes
> Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
> And plenteous harvests, to the prayer he makes,
> When, Isaac like, the solitary saint
> Walks forth to meditate at even tide,
> And think on her, who thinks not of herself.—COWPER.

So also the christian, perhaps, owes much of the efficacy of his faith and the serenity of his spirit, the pcace and joy which he has in believing, his deliverance in temptation, and his consolation in trouble, and whatever holy influences he may rejoice in, to the intercession of his Lord. At any rate, one consequence is certain. The doctrine has a tendency to excite gratitude, and to promote the growth of religious affections. To believe that we are thought of in heaven; that our benevolent and truest friend there takes an interest in us; that the gracious Father of our spirits has appointed that mention shall be continually made of the infirmities, the trials, the penitence, the temptations, the sorrows of his children—so that their state may never be forgotten, and that angels may rejoice in their welfare; to believe this, must strongly conduce to excite devout and grateful affections, to make us feel that we have to do with something better than the follies and sins of time, to make us realize that we are immortal and ought to be holy, and

to bring us, humble, rejoicing, confiding, to the throne of mercy, consecrated to His service, who has loved us with an everlasting love.

This is what may be called the moral efficacy of the doctrine; and may lead us to consider, as was in the last place proposed,

IV. The practical uses of the subject.

These, to one who is persuaded of its truth, cannot be slight. If we know that some valued friend, whose heart is one with us, and who earnestly desires our good, makes it one of the offices of his devotion to mention us affectionately before God and implore his benediction upon us; who of us can fail to be touched by such an act of friendship? who would not be led to strive that he might be worthy of the prayers thus presented, and not forfeit the blessings thus implored? The great Apostle to the Gentiles frequently reminds his brethren, that 'always, in all his prayers, he makes mention of them before God.' How likely was this to impress them with an affectionate and holy awe! How solicitous must it have rendered them to reward his kindness, and not to provoke the displeasure of that gracious Being to whom they were commended! And who can doubt, that, in all succeeding ages of the church, multitudes of souls have been impressed and won by the reflection, that their minister remembered them daily and nightly, in his prayers; that when thoughtless of themselves, he had not ceased to be concerned for them; and that his friendly intercessions for them, if despised and neglected on their part, would rise up to their shame and condemnation at last? How often also, has the minister, amid the toils and anxieties, the trials and disappointments attendant on his labors, been comforted by the assurance, that the faithful of his flock are bearing him up in their prayers at the mercy seat; that, in sympathy and love, they implore for him that aid and guidance, which only can support and cheer! This assurance is balm to his spirit. It gives him animation and confidence, and makes his heavy burdens light. If then christians would but realize, that he, who is more than a friend, more than a

pastor—the author and finisher of the faith which gives them life—'who died for them, and rose again, and is seated at the right hand of God,'—who will come again to judgment in the clouds of heaven, and from whose own voice they hope to receive a welcome to the joys of their Lord—that he 'makes intercession for them;'—how powerfully might it operate to inspirit their devotion, to excite their zeal, to quicken their improvement, to console them in trouble, to encourage them when doubtful and desponding!

Let us seek to secure to ourselves this good influence. When we raise our desires to Him, from whom cometh our help, it may warm and animate us to remember, that we have an 'advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' Offered through him, as the appointed way to the Father, our prayers cannot be frustrated nor lost.

The same thought may help to make us watchful. If we have an habitual persuasion that our virtue and salvation are anxiously desired by our Lord, we cannot fail to be more anxious for them ourselves, and to watch for them diligently. If Peter had borne humbly in mind his Master's words—'Simon, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not'—he would have been earnestly on his guard and not have fallen. But he forgot it, and his faith failed. So may ours fail, if we will not secure it by the grateful recollection of what is still done in our behalf.

We may find this persuasion of particular worth to us in times of temptation, sorrow, and spiritual despondency. When we deeply feel our weakness and insufficiency, when the world is dark, and our hearts are gloomy, and peace seems departed; then we may find in this doctrine a soothing and strengthening power. We lean upon the compassion of one, who 'was in all points tempted as we are,' and was 'made perfect through suffering.' We feel secure of sympathy from him, who suffered for us in his humiliation, and does not forget us now that he is exalted; and while we meditate and pray, the cloud is gradually removed, and we are restored to the brightness and calmness of spiritual peace.

DISCOURSE IX.

CHRIST THE JUDGE OF THE WORLD.

JOHN v. 22.

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.

OUR knowledge of the character and dispensations of God is derived from two sources; his works and his word; each of them addressed to, and interpreted by our understanding. His works—by which we mean the whole constitution of nature, so far as exposed to the view and investigation of man—offer the most convincing proofs of the existence, perfections and agency of the omnipresent spirit; and afford instructions, to a certain extent, clear and unquestionable, concerning his will and purposes. This is the religion of nature. His word contains the religion of revelation; a more complete discovery of his perfections and government, and comprising information respecting his designs and law, of which his works teach nothing. Especially in what regards the final purposes of God respecting the human race, and the mode in which they shall be accomplished; revelation unfolds what reason could never have gathered from nature. That there is a God, and that he rules the universe, 'all nature cries aloud through all her works.' 'That he delights in virtue,' is also evinced by the law written on the heart. But of the great purpose of the present administration, of the final

issue of this state of things, and the destiny which awaits man at the close of his mortal career; nothing is taught with certainty, and little can be even distinctly conjectured, from the intimations of nature around us, or the working of reason within us. What is known upon these points, is derived from revelation. There we learn distinctly the objects of our existence, the intentions of our Maker concerning us, the means of securing his favor, the certainty of another life, and the true way to avoid its misery and ensure its bliss. The important mysteries of the divine administration are laid open before us—'even that mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest by the writings of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God.'

These scriptures especially teach—what the works of God could never tell us—by what agency and through whose intervention the eternal benefits of divine grace are offered and secured to man. They alone unfold the offices of the Mediator between God and men, who brings the instructions and promises of a new covenant, and announces the peculiar relations and duties thence arising. All this, however, although not recorded in the volume of nature, is yet consistent with whatever that volume teaches. The dispensing of grace by Jesus Christ is an arrangement of the divine will altogether analogous to the other dispensations of God. It is conformable to all that we discern of the uniform and general procedure of providence. Every thing in the universe is conducted through the ministration of subordinate agents. God bestows existence and supports it, not by his own direct action, but through intermediate agency. He guides and rules, dispenses favor and manifests displeasure, by the operation of second causes, interposed between himself and his children. All things are his ministers and messengers to his offspring, in which and through which he is manifested, and they are his ministers and messengers to one another. It is one vast and unbroken system of mediation, ministration.

In perfect conformity to this, when he would establish among men the way of salvation and bring them to ever-

lasting life, he sent to them a Mediator—who should execute all which might be necessary to fulfil the purposes of the new dispensation, and be the head and prince of God's spiritual kingdom.

In order to the complete accomplishment of this extensive work, the scriptures inform us that the authority of Judge is given to him; that he, who oversees and guides the whole progress of the great spiritual kingdom among men, and is in God's stead to carry it forward to its consummation; is also to be the final distributer of its awards. To this effect our text contains an express assertion; 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.' This is repeated further on; 'He hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.' The same is implied in several of our Lord's parables, and especially in that which describes him as coming in the clouds, with the angels and glory of his Father, 'to separate the evil from the good, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.' The Apostle Paul says, 'We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.' In his address to the Athenians, he stated in express terms, 'that God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.' Peter also, addressing Cornelius, 'testified, that it is he who is ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead;' an expression, which he repeats in his first epistle, and which Paul uses in his second epistle to Timothy.*

These passages decide what is the doctrine of the New Testament on this point. It has been the acknowledged doctrine of the church in all its divisions. It may have been understood in senses somewhat various, but in some sense it has been universally received.

Nothing can be more interesting to the human soul, than the solemnities of judgment. Nothing can be better worthy our habitual reflections, than the fact that there will be a righteous retribution when life shall have closed. All that pertains to that judgment, and to him who shall ad-

* 1 Peter iv. 5. 2 Timothy iv. 1.

minister it, must be matter of deepest and most affecting interest. No one, who suffers himself to think at all, can think of it with indifference. I therefore ask attention to the remarks suggested by our text, concerning the nature of the office which Christ thus holds, the authority by which he exercises it, the reasons of his appointment to it, and the duties which are consequently imposed upon us.

I. The nature of this office.

The passages already cited teach, that it is to be executed at the final consummation of all things, when the issues of this probation shall be made known, and every man shall receive 'according to the deeds done in the body.' At that time, it is the Son of man, who shall sit on the throne of the kingdom, and welcome the righteous to the joy of their Lord, and deliver the unprofitable to outer darkness.

The inquiry is here suggested, whether we are to understand that this shall be strictly the act of the Saviour, present in his own person; or whether we are to suppose it intended only to represent, that the doctrines and laws of his religion shall determine the final state of every individual. Is he Judge, in the sense that he personally administers the sentence, or in the sense, that it is by his law that judgment shall be passed?

Each of these interpretations may find support from some passages of the Scriptures, and it may not be easy to satisfy ourselves which is the truth.

In regard to the first, it is strongly countenanced by the direct phraseology of the New Testament, in a multitude of instances. Jesus is there represented as personally appearing, sitting, speaking, and pronouncing judgment, in a manner which seems at first to require a literal interpretation. It does not at once suggest the idea, that nothing else is intended, but that the final distribution of rewards and punishments shall be made according to the rules of his gospel.

But then, on the other hand, it is well understood, that in common language, and most frequently in the language of the Bible, one is said to do what he causes to be done,

or provides for doing. According to which sense, we may understand Christ to be called the Judge of the world, because he provides the rules and publishes the laws by which judgment shall proceed. He himself authorizes this interpretation, when he says, 'If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; he hath one that judgeth him; *the word that I have spoken*, the same shall judge him at the last day.' It seems also to corroborate this interpretation, that he promises his disciples, that they shall 'sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;' and also that Paul says, 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' Now we do not for a moment suppose that the apostles shall be actually seated on twelve thrones, and take part in the distribution of rewards and punishments to God's creatures; much less that all christians shall be so employed; for they are all to be themselves subject to judgment. And still less do we imagine, that they shall be exalted to pass sentence upon angels. We do not hesitate to understand by this language, that the doctrine they hold is the rule by which all shall be judged, that the gospel they profess is the standard by which sentence shall be passed. And why are we not warranted in adopting the same exposition in the instance of our Lord? Why not use as a key to the other expressions his own declaration, that it is 'the word which he hath spoken, that shall judge them at the last day?'

It must be acknowledged, however, that perfect satisfaction upon this point is not easily obtained. Neither can it be considered essential. There is necessarily much pertaining to the last great day and its dread events, which the day only can reveal. It is sufficient for us, that we know by what law our actions shall be tried, and by how strict a standard our lives shall be judged. It will be the same thing, as regards our own state, whether our condition be silently determined by the word of Christ, which was given for our direction; or whether it be audibly announced from his lips. In either case, it will be bliss for those who are received, and woe for those who are rejected.

II. We come to the second point proposed; the authority by which our Lord exercises this office. Is it original, or is it derived? Is it his own, or does he receive it from another?

This is a question which can, of course, be answered only by the written testimony of revelation. Conjecture and reasoning upon this point are equally unprofitable and out of place. Only that word, which informs us that he holds the office, can tell us by what authority he holds it.

And here there is no deficiency of information, nor want of explicitness. Every passage to which we have referred, either directly asserts, or necessarily implies, that the authority is derived from the Father. 'The Father *hath committed* all judgment to the Son.' 'He hath *given me* authority to execute judgment.' 'He is *ordained of God* to be judge of quick and dead.' No language can be more unambiguous than this. Words could not deny more strongly all claim on our Lord's part to an original independent authority in this particular.

But notwithstanding this, it is remarkable, that men have been sometimes ready to forget this plain language of our Lord, and be rather guided by the suggestions of their own understanding. For, they argue, it is impossible that the office of judging the world should be delegated. It is a work to which only omniscience and omnipotence are equal; and these qualifications cannot be communicated to a finite being. For which reason, they say, it is necessary that the Judge should be the supreme deity himself; and hence they conclude that Jesus is himself the Almighty God.

Upon remarks of this sort we may observe, in the first place, that we have no right to say what powers God can or cannot communicate, what authority he can or cannot delegate. It is presumption in beings like us. How do we know that he may not impart to one of his creatures knowledge wide enough and power large enough to execute righteous judgment on the human race, without making it omnipotent or omniscient? What right have we to say that one cannot receive from God authority and wisdom sufficient to rule his church of this world, without making it

extend to all worlds? Why is it impossible to believe that God may 'COMMIT all judgment' to another?

It is hazardous to reason on this point in opposition to the plain language of revelation. Jesus Christ declares, that this authority is delegated, and refrains from all language which may imply underived wisdom, or native right. In words immediately following our text, he adds, 'I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me.' Shall we suffer any notion respecting the impossibility of a judgment without independent omniscience, to contradict this decisive language?

But further still. The very circumstance which we are ready to rely upon as proving that Jesus could not execute judgment, if he possessed only delegated power; is the very circumstance assigned in the sacred volume as a reason for its being delegated. Judgment, it is sometimes affirmed, cannot be impartial and just in the hands of one of limited knowledge. Who can feel safe, it is asked, to commit his eternal destiny to the decision of one who is not omniscient? Such is the wisdom of man. But not such the wisdom of God. He has seen fit to 'give' Jesus this authority. And why? For the very reason which men assign for its being impossible—'because he is the Son of man.' This is so frequently implied, that we might almost fancy it designed as a rebuke to man's presumptuous argument on the subject. 'He hath appointed a day' says Paul, 'in which he will judge the world in righteousness—*by the man* whom he hath ordained.' He himself says, 'My judgment is just.' Why? Because my knowledge and power are infinite? because I am the eternal and unerring God? Not at all. This is what men may say; but Christ assigns a very opposite reason: 'because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.'

It may well be added here, that, even on the supposition of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of our Lord; this speculative reasoning is altogether unsatisfactory and deceitful. For in that case, the scriptures speak of him as judge, never in his divine nature, but only

and always in his inferior nature. He hath authority, not because he is God, but 'because he is the Son of man.' So likewise says Paul—'the man whom he hath ordained.' So that, whatever ground may be taken, the scriptures deny that the possession of divine attributes is essential to this work. If it be said, that an influence is derived to the inferior nature by its union with God; this is undoubtedly true. This is what Jesus teaches, and what we insist upon always. 'The Father dwells in him,' and acts by him. It is not his own will, but the Father's. He judges as he hears, not according to his own will, but according to that of the Father who sent him. But this is a very different thing from possessing underived and inherent authority.

But still it may be urged, that judgment is ascribed to God in the scriptures, as his peculiar work; and how is this consistent with Christ being Judge, if he be not God?

Its consistency will be very apparent, if we take into view this obvious and simple consideration; that while it has pleased the Father to 'commit all judgment to the Son,' it is His infinite wisdom, justice, goodness, which rule in the Son, and accomplish the great work. He has not left him incompetent, but has given to him 'the spirit without measure.' 'It hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell.' In a word, 'God *judges the world by him.*'

In this view of the subject, every thing is consistent and satisfactory. Let us hear no more of reluctance to submit to him who is thus appointed. If we will consent to take the doctrine as it stands in the scriptures, and will not strive to be wise above what is written; we shall find nothing in it to perplex our understandings, nothing that needs the remedy of our speculations, but every thing to warrant our steadfast confidence, our fervent faith, our unfeigned adoration.

If, however, we desire a little further satisfaction, we may find it in the remarks which occur under the next head of discourse; in which it was proposed

III. To consider the reasons of this appointment; to inquire briefly and humbly into some of the causes why the

Father of the universe, the kind and equal parent of all, should himself judge no man, but commit all judgment to the Son.

We may undoubtedly find one reason in the circumstance to which we have already alluded—that it is the general method of God's administration to provide for and rule his creation by the agency of intermediate ministers. From this method we do not know that there is any departure. To maintain a uniformity with the general system, we may readily suppose to be one reason of this judicial appointment. As he had led his people by Moses and Joshua, and taught them by the prophets, and chastened them by the heathen, and enlightened men by a special messenger, and reconciled and saved them by a chosen mediator; so he would in like manner judge the world by his Son. It is one instance among multitudes of what is the established ordinance of the divine government.

Another reason for this appointment is contained in the remarkable expression of a verse, which I have already more than once cited. 'He hath appointed him to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.' There is something indescribably affecting in the disclosure which is thus made of the tenderness of our heavenly Father. He, who has made all and has a right to all, has not only forborne and cherished his sinful offspring here, and made punishment his strange work upon earth; but has extended his forbearance even to the last sad trial; has, if we may so represent it, descended from his throne of majesty, and stript it of those terrors of vengeance and indignation, before which neither stubborn guilt nor timid innocence would be able to stand; and has purposed to issue the decisions of that awful day—not even from the milder seat of paternal justice—but from the serene and sympathizing lips of the once human Saviour; of one who had been in the world and known the trials and weaknesses of flesh; who had himself combated temptation, and endured suffering, and been acquainted with grief; who is therefore capable of being touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and extending compassion to those who are out of the way. With

such an Advocate and Judge, of whom all that we have known has been benevolent, tender, and forbearing,—we feel assured that mercy shall reign in the midst of judgment; that while severity flashes on the criminal, there shall yet be no room for unrelenting wrath; but every infirmity shall receive compassion, and all possible allowance be made for the weakness of the flesh and the seductions of the world. Let the timid and desponding disciple be comforted and at peace. Let the tempted and tried, the sorrowing and fearful, give way to no despair. For it is to him, who bore our infirmities and carried our sorrows, who breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax; it is to him that judgment has been committed, 'because he is the Son of man.'

Thus has this appointment been made for the purpose of manifesting the compassion of God. 'Mercy belongeth unto thee, O Lord; because thou renderest to every man according to his works.'* Rich indeed that mercy! which began with the mission of the Saviour, and is consummated in the gracious tenderness of the judgment seat! What an aggravation to the guilt of that man, who can still go on, hardening himself in sin! and who will carry nothing but corrupt and obstinate disobedience to the presence of eternal love!

IV. We were to notice, in the last place, the duty which is in consequence of this doctrine imposed upon us. This is stated by our Lord himself in the words succeeding our text—'that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.' In consequence of this appointment to judge the world, it becomes our duty to render to him the reverence, submission, and confidence, which appertain to the great Sovereign in whose name he acts. The honors which belong to the prince, are demanded for his ambassador. The Lord said, 'They who receive you receive me; and they who receive me, receive him who sent me.' 'God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

* Psalm lxii, 12.

and every tongue confess him to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' This is one appointed test of devotion to God. A right spirit of subjection and submission to Him, will necessarily be manifested by confidence, faith, and trust in him, whom He has commissioned—to refuse which, is an evidence of disrespect toward the Sovereign himself.

But this is not our only duty. If Christ is to sit on the judgment seat, we are to stand before it, and give account of every work which we have done, and of every secret thought, whether it be good or whether it be evil. For that day we are to prepare. The thought of it should have influence upon the whole habitual frame of our minds, and the entire character of our lives. It should make sin our abhorrence and holiness our delight. It should excite us to diligence in the work of obedience and faith, that we may be found blameless and accepted at last. It should lead us to familiar acquaintance with that word according to which our destiny shall be determined, and to the devout performance of every duty it enjoins; that so we may be welcomed to the joy of our Lord, and not be cast out with the rejected and impenitent.

Finally, brethren, since so momentous consequences depend on the account we are to give at the judgment seat of Christ, let us accustom ourselves to reflect on the nature of this office, on the authority by which he is invested with it, the reasons for which it is committed to him, and the duties which thence are demanded of us. Let us thus cherish and confirm our conviction of the supremacy of the God and Father of all, and of that excellent grace which is here exhibited. Let us habitually reverence and submit to the authority which he has laid upon his Son. Let us feel with what diligent and grateful fidelity, and with what scrupulous dread of sin, we should look forward to the day of final recompense; when the penitent and believing shall view with joy the smiles of the Redeemer's face; when the unbelieving and disobedient shall taste tenfold anguish from the very tenderness of that compassionate Judge, who shall pity while he condemns.

DISCOURSE X.

ON HONORING THE SON.

JOHN v. 22.

That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.

IT is impossible to contemplate the character and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ, without perceiving that exalted honor is due to him. The insensibility of that man can hardly be conceived, who should be able to question or withhold it. We yield a tribute of respect to the good men with whom we meet in the ordinary intercourse of life; and every distinguished benefactor is accounted to deserve the distinguished gratitude and respect of his fellow-men. No one therefore, who has the common feelings of a man, can deny to Jesus Christ his claims to reverence, gratitude and honor—whose character exhibits the perfection of moral excellence, whose history is connected with the most wonderful works of universal benevolence, worthy the counsels of heaven; who was declared to be the Son of God by a voice from above; proved himself the friend of men by his labors in their cause, and the conqueror of death by his resurrection from the tomb; who is declared to be 'the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person,' and to whom God has committed the judgment of the world. Even those, who have rejected his revelation, and denied his authority as a divine messenger, have been unable to speak of him in any accents but those of admira-

tion. One of the most eloquent tributes in his praise, was from the pen of an open infidel. What then should be the feeling of his disciples, who believe that he came from God, and that 'the Father dwelt in him' and taught by him, and constituted him our Prince and Saviour and Judge? and that 'to receive him, is to receive the Father who sent him?' Their hearts must surely burn within them when they think of him. They must anxiously inquire what are the honors demanded for him, that they may not be remiss in rendering them.

The expression of our text is a remarkable one, and offers some important suggestions relative to so interesting a topic. These we shall perhaps pursue to the most satisfactory result by inquiring first *why*, and secondly *how*, *we are to honor the Father*, that we may thence be instructed *why and how we are to honor the Son.*

I. We are to consider, in the first place, *why we are to honor the Father.* Upon what reasons are founded the honors due to him?

Of the infinite Being who is called God, we can comprehend but little. 'Who by searching can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?' We know not the essence of the Deity, nor can we fully comprehend the mode of his existence. Our whole knowledge of him is comprised in a few facts. We know that he exists and exists through all extent, omnipresent, and omniscient. That he is a spirit; that is, he is not the subject of any of our senses, and exists in a manner so different from our mode of existence, that he may be equally present in all places. That he is eternal; there never was a point of time in which he was not, and there never shall be a time when he shall cease to be. That he is infinitely powerful; capable of doing all which is possible to be done, while not all the collected force of the countless multitudes of other beings could offer opposition. These facts respecting the Deity, constitute what are called his natural attributes. They enter into the very definition of God; so that a being, who does not possess these attributes of almighty power, universal presence, infinite knowledge, and spirituality, is not God.

Now the question is, whether it be these attributes, which require of us the honors we pay to God? Though without these he would not be God, yet is it these, upon which are built religious homage and allegiance? There is one simple consideration, which, I think, may satisfy us, that it is not, certainly not entirely nor chiefly; and that is, that if these natural attributes were united with *an evil and malignant character*—supposing such a union possible—we could not be bound to render to that Being the same homage, which we now render to our beneficent Creator. If, for example, Satan, the personified principle of evil,—selfish, perverse and malicious—were a self-existent, all-knowing, all-powerful, omnipresent, eternal, spirit; still, we should not for a moment imagine, that the honors, now paid to the infinitely Good, would of right belong to him.

If then, these attributes do not form the ground of the honors rendered to the Father; what are the divine perfections to which they are rendered? Obviously, those which we call the *moral* perfections—his essential holiness, his perfect rectitude, unerring wisdom, unwavering truth and faithfulness, impartial justice, infinite goodness and mercy. He is clothed with righteousness, purity and love—the kind Creator, the observing Governor, the gracious Father; earnestly desiring first the perfect virtue, and then the perfect happiness, of every living being. For these attributes he is reverenced; for these it is that angels and archangels praise him, and hymns of adoration ascend from the lips of glorified spirits; for these it is that his people bend in awe before him, for these that his children love him, and his saints bless him. 'Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? For thou only art HOLY.' 'Praise the Lord, for he is GOOD, for his MERCY endureth forever.'*

Such are the reasons for which God is honored. You perceive that they may easily be reduced to two; first, his own character; second, the relation in which he stands to his creatures. He is infinitely excellent and glorious in himself, and to us he is Creator and Proprietor, Governor and Father.

We take these remarks to guide us in speaking of the

* A note upon this passage will be found at the end of the volume.

honor due to the Son of God. As we honor the Father, because of his own character, and because of his relation to us; so we honor the Son, because of his character, and because of his relation to us. As it is not the divine nature simply—not the natural attributes of eternity, omnipresence, and spirituality—on account of which divine homage is rendered, but rather the moral perfections of character; so likewise honor is demanded for the Saviour, not simply on account of his nature, whatever it may be—not because he is more or less elevated in precedence of existence or native powers; but rather because of his perfections of character, and the offices in which he stands related to us. For it is evident, beyond all dispute, that a Being of precisely the same natural rank as our Lord, but without the same character and offices, would have no peculiar claims to honor from men; and that, on the other hand, these claims would be precisely the same, whatever his nature or rank might be, so long as his relations to man were unchanged, and he sustained the place to which God has exalted him in his spiritual dispensations. If, when we receive him as God's Ambassador and Son, clothed with divine authority and wisdom, we obey him as our Master, and love him as our Saviour, and reverence him as our Judge—then we honor him as the Father. If, when we see the same holy attributes which we adore in God, displayed in the benevolent and spotless life of Jesus, we are led to emotions of admiration and love—then we honor him as we honor the Father. We receive him in the offices and relations to which God appointed him, and thus in fact receive and honor Him who sent him.

It never must be forgotten, that 'all things are of God.' He is the beginning and end, the support and head of every thing which exists. Jesus indeed is 'Head over all things to the church;' but the apostle tells us, that he 'was made' so by God. God is the origin and foundation of all. His relation to us he assumed of his own pleasure; he sustains it of his own right and power. Our relation to Him is derived from the very frame of our nature, and the original purpose of our creation. We are his offspring, he is our Creator. In these respects our relation to the Lord Jesus

Christ differs. It did not commence with the act of creation, is not founded in the original constitution of nature, but is founded by an express appointment of our Creator and Father. It originates in the purposes of his redeeming love, and is in every respect dependent upon his ordinance. This distinction is important to be kept in view, if we would understand the subject rightly. It is amply supported by the perpetual testimony of the scriptures. It is repeatedly asserted in express terms, and every where implied in their language respecting Jesus. Why does he hold the place of Lord and Christ? Because, saith Peter, '*God hath* MADE this same Jesus whom ye crucified, to be both Lord and Christ.' Why does he sustain the important rank of Prince and Saviour? Because, saith the Apostle, 'him hath God *exalted* to be a Prince and Saviour.' In a word, whence hath he his name above every name, and why in that name must 'every knee bow, and every tongue confess him to be Lord?' The Apostle replies, because 'GOD hath highly *exalted* him, and *given* him that name.' And for whose glory is all this to be done? The same Apostle declares, 'to the glory of God—the Father.'

In all this we find fully maintained the distinction between the honors which christians are to render to their God and to their Saviour. The infinite God claims them in his own name, by his own right, for his own glory. Jesus claims them, not in his own name, nor by his own right, nor for his own glory. He refers them constantly to the Father. Even in the powerful language of our text, he challenges to himself no independent honors, but expressly founds his title on the appointment of God. 'The Father judgeth no man, but *hath committed all* judgment to the Son; that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.' Here he declares that he is *appointed* to be Judge, not that he is so by inherent right; and that in the execution of that office he is to be honored as the Father who appointed him, and in whose place, and for whose glory he acts. In this manner the honor demanded for Jesus, is on account of the offices to which

God has exalted him; his own authority or right is never alleged as a ground of it, as it always is in the case of God himself. 'Of himself,' he says, 'the Son can do nothing.' 'All power is committed to me of my Father.'

I have thus endeavored to exhibit the foundation of our Lord's claims to honor from his disciples. They rest upon the perfection of his character, and the places to which God has exalted him. As we bow to the authority of God, so, brethren, let us acknowledge these claims. Let us bow in that name above every name, with which the eternal God hath glorified his Son. Since it hath pleased Him to bestow upon him the spirit 'without measure,' and to cause 'the fulness of the Godhead to dwell in him,' let us not be backward in those ascriptions which are justly his due; but let 'every tongue confess him to be Lord, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.'

But what are these honors, and how to be rendered? This is the second topic of which I proposed to treat.

II. And here also, as under the other head, we shall be guided by considering *how we honor the Father*.

In the first place, we honor the Father by the direct offering to him of supreme worship, by the express and immediate presentation of adoration and prayer to him, as the ever present, all guiding, and infinitely powerful Sovereign of the universe; who can hear, who receives, and who will reward, this tribute to his glory.

Now the question is, whether the honors to the Son are to be in the same sense divine and supreme; worship, is this high degree; adoration, praise, prayer. There are several reasons which show it to be impossible. The remarks already made, prove it; for, we have seen, they show these honors to be derived from different sources. The Father is to be honored as the infinite and sole origin and support of all beings and all things, from whom we came, and for whose glory all things exist. But Jesus derived his power and offices from the will of the supreme Father, and his honors result not to himself alone, but to the Father's glory. Which decisively evinces that those honors are not supreme worship.

Besides, our Lord himself determines the point very simply and satisfactorily. As there is but one object of supreme worship, he repeatedly and emphatically—as if for the express purpose of preventing all doubt and mistake—declares that object to be the Father. He never says, Pray to *God;* in which expression, if we believed Jesus to be God, we might possibly suppose him to include himself; but he always says, 'Pray to the *Father*,' 'worship the *Father;*' 'Pray to thy Father who is in secret;' 'after this manner therefore pray ye; Our Father who art in heaven;' 'The true worshippers shall worship the Father.' He himself, repeatedly, in the presence of his disciples and of the Jews, prayed; and in every instance to the Father. Nay, and what is more still—as if anxious to remove all cause and every possibility of mistake—he said to his disciples, 'in that day' (that is, after the resurrection) 'ye *shall ask* ME *nothing;* verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the *Father, in my name*, he will give it you.' Language cannot be more explicit than this. A more plain and positive declaration cannot be given, that we must pray to the Father only. It goes decisively to prove, that the honor spoken of in our text, cannot be supreme worship, or divine homage.

This conclusion is fortified by looking once more at the expressions of our text. Our Lord is speaking of his character as Judge; which, he says, is 'committed to him of his Father;' and therefore, while he exercises it in the place and by the appointment of the Father, 'men should honor him as the Father.' Now this is in accordance with a very obvious and simple principle, which has never been misunderstood in any other case—that he who executes an office in the name of his King, is to be respected in that office as the king. The magistrate is to be honored as he who appoints him, the ambassador as he who delegates him; and to insult or disobey the ambassador or judge, is to insult or disobey the king or nation for which that officer acts. Yet though the one is honored *as* the other, the forms and testimonials of that homage are not exactly the same, nor even of equal dignity. It was according to the same mode of speech, that our Lord said to his apostles,

'He that receiveth you receiveth me.' No one supposes from this mode of expression, that no difference was made in the reception of the apostles and of their master, or in other words, that the same respect was or ought to be shown to both. And when he immediately adds, 'He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me,' we understand it in a similar sense. The honor to Jesus is as much the same with that to God, as the respect to his apostles is the same with that to their master. This sort of language, indeed, is readily understood, and has never led to any mistake, except in the instance of our text. Let us not misunderstand it there. Let us render to the Father the honor which is due to the Independent Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of all; to the Son as the Teacher, Lawgiver, Saviour, and Spiritual Prince, whom he has appointed; to the one, as sitting upon the throne; to the other, as the Lamb before the throne; to the one therefore as receiving prayer; to the other as him through whom it is conveyed. Let us join the crowd of celestial worshippers who cast their crowns before the throne, and worship 'Him who liveth forever and ever,' and 'who hath created all things;' who also 'sing a new song' to the Lamb, who 'was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood.'

But direct worship, we are to remember, is not the only mode in which we honor the Father. We honor him by the exercise of *faith* in him; by reposing in his character and providence and word, a thorough confidence, unreserved and cheerful trust. When this is done by magnanimously bearing his will, acquiescing in his appointments, and rejoicing in his government—even if it be silently, it is a tribute greater than words can pay, a homage which the tongue alone cannot render. Even so we honor the Son of God by the exercise of *faith* in him. 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' The reliance on the truth of his promises, on the excellence of his character, on the divinity of his mission, and the sufficiency of his work for our salvation—which is all implied in faith—is an unequivocal tribute of honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, we honor the Father by *love* to him. This is 'the first and great commandment; thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' In like manner, we honor the Son by our *love* to him; by cherishing his image with deep and earnest affection; by delighting to meditate on his character and think of his excellencies; by commemorating whenever we may, his labors, sacrifices, and death in our behalf. The love, which the sincere disciple cherishes for his holy master, is a tribute of the truest honor. It burns in his bosom and elevates his soul, as it did that of the apostles; so that there are seasons, when, kindling into rapture like theirs, he is ready to exclaim, 'Whom not having seen we love, and in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

Gratitude also forms part of the honors which we render to the Father. That is a most acceptable homage which is offered by the glowing and grateful heart, lifting itself up to God on account of unnumbered and unmerited favors—life, strength, reason, friends; the blessings of earth, the revelations of heaven; the support of his providence, the guidance of his word, the aid of his spirit. A similar honor we yield to the Son by the *gratitude* we cherish toward him—for his disinterested labors, his condescending love, his gracious sacrifices; for the life he spent in our service, for the death he died in our behalf, for his intercessions at the right hand of God. It is a similar feeling and a similar honor to the Son as to the Father.

Further; we honor the Father by *obedience*. There is no mode, indeed, by which we so surely demonstrate our supreme reverence for the Creator and Governor of men, as by the unreserved subjection of heart and life to the obedience of his law. It is the highest and most acceptable tribute we can bring. Ten thousand offerings of eloquent praise and costly gifts are light in comparison of the great gift of the heart and life. So too we yield the highest tribute of honor to our Lord Jesus, when we *obey his gospel* in the spirit of it. Who honors him, like him that obeys him? Who is his friend, but he that 'keeps his commandments?' It is not by contentions respecting the dignity of his nature, and vehement declamation con-

cerning the love and praise which are his due, that we most effectually promote his glory. The living, acting eulogy of him who breathes his spirit, imitates his example, and keeps his commandments, is an offering infinitely more worthy.

In these several ways the injunction may be observed to 'honor the Son even as we honor the Father.' God is our Creator and Sovereign, and claims our reverence, faith, love, gratitude, and obedience. Jesus Christ is our Lord and Teacher, our Prince and Saviour, and claims our reverence, faith, love, gratitude, and obedience. Let them be yielded to him. Let the homage be rendered, which belongs to him whom God has ordained to be the religious head of the present dispensation of grace, and to judge the world in righteousness. We sit beneath his empire; let us be subject to him. In truth and holiness, in matters of conscience and duty, let us have no master upon earth but him. This is his rightful claim; let it be given to no one else. We break our allegiance if we yield to any other the dominion over our faith, or the keeping of our consciences. This dominion has been granted to Jesus alone. If any other exercise it, he is a usurper. If any allow it to be exercised, they have rebelled against their spiritual prince, and taken from his head the crown of honor which God had placed there.

And yet—how prone are we to substitute some easier show of allegiance, in place of this thorough submission of life and conscience! How ready are we to be loud in professions and acclamations, while in fact we have another master and follow another guide! The disgrace of the church in all ages has been its infatuated adherence to human authority, and its willing subjection to human heads. The crown has been torn from him, whose right it is to reign, and placed—not unfrequently with bloody hands—on the brows of arrogant and ambitious persecutors, who ostentatiously became the infallible interpreters of a book which they had sealed, and the capricious masters of the consciences of the christian world. And thus, while the banner of the cross was made to float proudly amid their armies, and pomp and parade, and splendid ceremony

called the wondering multitude to gaze at the honors which were lavished on the Saviour of the world; in the mean time, his authority was virtually trodden under foot, and the hearts of men were far from him.

The church is not yet entirely purified from these sad corruptions. The disciples do not yet sufficiently understand what constitutes the true honor of their master and of his gospel. Too many think it sufficient to cry 'Lord, Lord,' without 'doing the things which he says.' Too many are still bowing down to creeds and confessions, idols, which their own hands have made, and which draw away their reverence from the true word of life. Too many are still taking from human lips the interpretation of God's will, while its sacred records lie by them unsearched, and the voice of him, who 'spake as never man spake,' is not allowed to reach the understanding or the heart, till it has been mingled with the interpretation of some later master. Alas, how has the Son of God been robbed of his honors! how have they been transferred to men! Brethren, do not suffer yourselves to be so deceived. If you call any one master, you withdraw your allegiance from him who should be your only master, you exalt a frail man to the seat of judgment where God has placed his Christ, you surrender your faith and salvation to the wisdom of a fallible being, who ought to be sitting with you at the feet of your common Lord, and you are thus exposed to the hazard of his weakness, errors, and sins. Take therefore his word for your guide. All that you may say, or believe, or profess, respecting his dignity, exaltation, and authority, is but empty words, but unmeaning profession, if your consciences are subject to any other dominion, or your life to any other law. When you are so subject to the spirit and influence of his truth, that men shall take knowledge of you that you have been with him, and learned of him; then you will have yielded to him the only sufficient tribute, —the only valuable and acceptable homage, which man on earth can bring. Then you may know that you are his, and that your labor is done; for he who hath the Son hath the Father also, and he who hath the Father, hath everlasting life.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE EXAMPLE OF OUR LORD.

HEBREWS xii. 2.

Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

THE Apostle had been naming, in the preceding chapter, a long catalogue of those who were eminent for their faith in former days. In the first verse of the present chapter, he represents them as a 'cloud of witnesses,' surrounding christians, by whose presence they should be excited to run well the race set before them. In thus expressing himself, he evidently alludes to the public games, which were of such celebrity and consequence in that age of the world. He urges christians to persevere, like combatants in the race, who struggled hard for the prize, and to be animated by the attendant crowd of witnesses; and as a further incitement, directs them in our text, to be also looking unto Jesus, 'the author and finisher of their faith.' Commentators, who are skilled in the original languages, and acquainted with the customs of former times, tell us, that the titles here given to Christ are those which belonged to him who presided at the games. Macknight accordingly translates, 'the captain and perfecter of the faith;' and observes, that 'the apostle, having exhorted the Hebrews to run the race set before them, compares Jesus to the judge of the games, whose office it was to determine who were the conquerors, and to make them perfect as combatants by bestowing on them the prizes.'

But there is something further implied than even this. The apostle speaks of him as one who has himself run the same race, in spite of its discouragements and hardships, and is now enjoying its rewards; 'who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God;' whom we are, therefore, to regard as an example to ourselves, and to animate our flagging spirits by remembering, that as 'he overcame, and is set down with his Father on his throne; so, if we overcome, we shall sit down with him on his throne.'

The disciples of Jesus are thus, in the passage before us, directed to 'look unto him' as their Leader, their Judge, and their example; exalted at the right hand of God's throne, because 'he endured the cross, and despised the shame.'—By the example of their Master, thus honored and exalted, the disciples are exhorted to be encouraged and strengthened. It is this exhortation upon which we are to meditate at the present time. Brethren, I wish you to contemplate Jesus to day as your Example. I wish to bring up to your minds and hearts the pattern of your beloved and honored Lord; and to show you how great encouragement, aid, comfort, and holy peace, may be obtained in all duty, trial, and sorrow, by habitually and fervently looking unto him.

The power of example is too well known to need to be much insisted on. Man has been called—and with some propriety—the creature of imitation. The character of children is very much formed on the model of their parents, and of those companions with whom they familiarly associate. Every parent knows the importance of this consideration in selecting the person by whom his children shall be instructed, and the school at which they shall find companions. The power of example is plainly seen in the formation of national character. Every separate community among men, whether larger or smaller, is distinguished by certain peculiarities of character and habit. These are to be traced almost exclusively to the influence of example —the manners of one generation being caught by the

next, and transmitted down from sire to son indefinitely. The power of example is also seen in the religions of the world. Men have imitated the deities whom they have worshipped, and formed in themselves the characters which they supposed to exist in their gods. 'The gods of the heathen are vanity and a lie; they that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.' When the divinities, to whom worship and devotion were paid, were believed to be possessed of human passions, and to be guilty of human vices; when their histories were filled with selfishness, cruelty, revenge, lust, and every immorality; it is not strange that men took countenance from the examples, and went to an extravagant dissoluteness of manners, into which, without such encouragement, they could hardly have fallen.—As much of the prevalent vice of heathen nations is to be ascribed to this cause; so, doubtless, much of the prevalent virtue of the christian world is to be attributed to the character of the true God, as he is there worshipped. In christian lands, too, the efficacy of example has been witnessed and valued in the use, which has always been made of the lives of the apostles, saints, and martyrs. In memory of their excellence some churches have established festivals, and others have published records of their lives, and circulated volumes in their praise. There can be no doubt, that much has in this way been done to excite and strengthen in the practice of religion and virtue. Living and breathing patterns of excellence are placed before the way-faring christian. He witnesses their ardor, is made acquainted with their anxious labors, hears of their severe trials and persevering fidelity; and by observing how they watched and prayed, toiled and suffered, learns to go and do likewise.

Our own experience may perhaps confirm to us these remarks. How often has a holy zeal been kindled within us, while we have read of the faith and patience of some eminent servant of God who has gone before us! How have our resolutions to do and to suffer been confirmed, when we have listened to the story of another's unshaken

fidelity and unwearying perseverance! Next to the reading of the scriptures, and the appointed preaching of God's word, religion doubtless owes more to the persuasion of pious example, than to all other causes. Every christian can remember instances in which it has given ardor to his faith, and confidence to his virtue, and comfort to his troubles. The thought of what Howard did has prompted the benevolence of thousands; and the zeal of Clarkson has kindled a flame in a multitude of souls. Many are they that have been affected and won by the beautiful life of Fenelon, and caught the contagion of religion from the breathing spirit of Watts, or the singular excellence of Cappe. In a word, whatever other means may have been enjoyed, it is the example of the holy and good, which has excited the energy of their minds, and made them capable of great and perilous enterprises, and filled them with longings after perfection.

But if such be the value and effect of contemplating those who have exhibited before us christian faith and obedience; if we may be thus moved and animated by the example of imperfect men, who after all have followed their holy Master only at a distance; what might not be the effect of bringing home to our minds, and setting before us in our lives, the perfect example of that blessed Master himself? I fear, brethren, that we place him too far from us. I fear that we too much neglect to bring him near, and keep him before us, and realize the manner of his conversation and life; and that he requires us, not only to do according to his commandment, but according to his example. Yet why should we not realize this? Why not literally make him our Pattern? why not in every season, 'look to him,' think how he did in a similar situation, what dispositions he indulged on similar occasions, how he would conduct himself and how feel, in circumstances like our own? Is not this practicable? Would it not greatly assist us? Would it not often deliver us in perplexity and error? It is true, he lived many ages ago. But time and distance are nothing in a case like this. The mind has power to

bring him near, and he is as important and personal a friend now, as if we had lived in his own day. It is true also, his example is in a sense so perfect, that we may not hope to equal it. But this should be no discouragement. It should rather animate us the more. It is an old proverb, that he who aims at the sun, to be sure will not reach it, but his arrow will fly higher than if he aimed at an object on a level with himself. Just so, if other men are our standard, we shall never be better than other men; probably not so good. But if we imitate Jesus, we shall certainly rise above them, though we shall come far short of him. Besides; there is nothing impracticable in the virtues of Jesus; that is to say, nothing, which is above the earth and the concerns or wants of the earth, in such a sense as to be unsuitable to men, or to render it romantic for them to practise it. On the contrary, his is one of the most practical characters in the world; exhibiting specimens of the very dispositions, principles, habits, which are of the most constant and indispensable need in the intercourse and duties of life. What more so, than his invariable gentleness, his untiring benevolence, his ready forgiveness, his humility and condescension, his meekness and patience, his cheerful contentment, his activity in duty, his fortitude in suffering, his unreserved trust in divine providence, his holy submission to the divine will? These are the prominent features in his human character. These are the qualities in which he should be our example; they are qualities every day, every hour needed, and the possession of which would render every day, every hour, tranquil, lovely, and happy. And this example is set before us as one which we should by no means gaze at with despair, because exhibited by one, who—in the language of holy writ—'was made in all points like unto his brethren; who took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; as the children are made partakers of flesh and blood, so he also himself took part in the same; was in all points tempted like as we are, though without sin; and, though a son, yet learned obedience by the

things which he suffered.' In this language of the sacred volume, we find him represented as passing through the infirmities and trials of life, obeying and suffering, in all things like his brethren, and in all things an example to his brethren; who, by witnessing his temptations and trials, his 'strong crying and tears,' his obedience and faithfulness, may learn what they ought to do, and how they should do it; and may be comforted, strengthened, and supported in all, by looking unto him. In respect of such things, says the apostle, 'he is not ashamed to call them brethren;' and how encouraging to them may be the thought, that, in seeking to become 'heirs of God,' they are 'joint heirs with Christ!'

Is there not something possible—I had almost said, something easy—in setting up before us such a pattern? If we should do it faithfully, would not our hearts cleave to it? and should we not soon learn to loathe every path, in which we had not seen his pure feet tread? Should we not delight to gaze upon his benevolence and piety, his activity and patience, his humility and fortitude? and while we contemplated them familiarly, should we not even copy them involuntarily, and grow like him, as a child grows like its beloved parent,—unconsciously, and because we could not escape the celestial contagion?

It must be evident, then, that our Lord's example is not such a one as we cannot follow; but has been most wisely and kindly adapted to our situation and wants. If then the power of example over man be great, as we have seen, and that of good men have done so much to influence and form human character; the value of this example, if faithfully applied to our lives, and assiduously followed, must be great beyond all calculation. There is no good feeling which it might not perfect, no amiable virtue which it might not form, no suffering which it would not enable us to bear, no temptation which it might not help us to subdue. It would be a present aid, a sure counsellor, an unerring guide, in every perplexity, trial and duty. The world might fling around you her most fearful shades of darkness

and despair, and every human power be ready to shrink from the path in which providence should lead you; but yet, steadfastly looking unto Jesus—who once endured it all,—observing how he struggled, how he conquered, and how he is exalted; you would feel a strength by which you might dissipate the cloud and the terror, and find every mountain and hill brought low;—yea, you might even, as the Lord promised his disciples, 'tread on serpents, and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy; and nothing should by any means hurt you.'

This may be made yet plainer by observing its operation in a few particular cases.

You desire to know by what dispositions toward God you may attain his acceptance. You know, indeed, that supreme love to him is the commandment; but you would learn more definitely in what this love consists, and in what kind of demeanor it exhibits itself.—'Look unto Jesus, and learn of him'—the fairest, the fullest example of perfect love. You see it in him an essential, all-pervading, ever-operating principle; not distinct and separate from every other feature of his character, but inwoven with all the others and inseparable from them; the spirit of all, rather than a spirit by itself. It is exhibited in a calm, equal, and unwavering contentment; because he entirely trusts Him whom he loves: in quiet, solemn and constant intercourse with Him in prayer; not in noisy and extravagant raptures, but in the deep and fervent communion of a full heart, whose feeling is too real to be loud. Especially it is exhibited in anxious efforts and ready sacrifices to do his will, and accomplish the appointed work of his good pleasure. Fix your eye upon this beautiful pattern of perfect piety, follow these steps, and you will never need be at a loss for the path of the perfect love of God.

Perhaps you are beset with temptation. The world and sin entice you. They have spread their snares, and placed you amid bad and seducing companions, from whom you can hardly hope to escape without corruption. Your resolutions are assailed, and your faith seems about to be

wrecked.—'Look unto Jesus;' remember him, tempted in all points as you are, that he might be able to 'succor those who are tempted.' Remember how he struggled with the adversary of souls in the desert, and overcame the strongest solicitations—solicitations, to which yours are not to be compared. Remember how the trial of his soul wrought an agony in the garden, when so strongly tempted to refuse the cup that was prepared for him. Remember how, in those trying seasons, he summoned to his aid the word of God, and baffled the tempter with this 'sword of the spirit;' and how he waxed strong and became conqueror by persevering in prayer. Go thou, and do likewise. No temptation is too powerful for him, who will watch and pray like his holy Lord; and do not thou lose an honorable place in his kingdom by weakly shrinking from a contest, in which he hath taught thee how to fight, and to become more than conqueror.

Here is another man, beset by the sin of Pride. A lofty spirit and high heart are his glory. He despises others, and lives only to aggrandize himself. My friend, 'look unto Jesus.' He—the Author and Finisher of our faith—the noblest personage that ever walked the earth—who possessed more than human knowledge and wisdom, and wielded the powers of heaven—are you greater than he, that you should thus exalt yourself, while he was so humble, so lowly, so unassuming? Behold him, who stript himself of his honors, who took 'the form of a servant,' who came, 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister,'—and blush for your own swelling importance. There is no pride in Jesus—How unbecoming then in you! How despicable do the vain and haughty appear, by the side of the unassuming and condescending humility, which graced the life of the Son of God! How little able will you be to indulge emotions of arrogance and self-sufficiency, if you faithfully set before you that beautiful and affecting example!

Here is another, the slave of angry and revengeful passions, easily provoked to wrath, and betrayed to violence. 'Look unto Jesus; learn of him, who was meek and lowly

in heart.' Is there any thing more lovely than his equable and long suffering gentleness—' who though reviled, reviled not again, though he suffered, threatened not, but submitted himself to him that judgeth righteously.' Why may not you do likewise? Why *will* you not do likewise? Why should not patience and meekness be honorable in you, as well as in him? and why should revenge and passion be less odious? Be but familiar with his quiet temper, and feel how lovely it is in him; and you cannot cherish those opposite dispositions, which will then be hateful in your sight.

Again; you are perhaps suffering from the injuries of men, and the injustice of the world; you have been wronged, or disgraced, or persecuted; and how shall you conduct yourself under these aggravated evils? 'Look unto Jesus,' and take instruction from his example. You see in him no boiling indignation, no impatience of revenge, no returning of malice for malice. But his spirit, though oppressed, still retains its serenity, and turning from the injustice of man, finds repose on the justice of God. Be not you, then, impatient. Be not you overwhelmed by passion or despair. Your sufferings cannot compare with his; and shall you not at least strive to bear them like him? You cannot meet equal injustice; and will you not seek at least for equal composure? Behold him, who had spent the faithful days of a laborious life in doing good; whose only care was to benefit mankind; and who displayed an extent of active benevolence never before even imagined; yet assailed by those very persons for whom he had been laboring, cruelly arraigned before and unfeeling tribunal on a false pretence, and subjected to all the ignominy and torture of a mock trial—smitten—buffeted---scourged—derided—insulted—dragged away to a lingering and disgraceful death. Have you endured hardship and injustice to be named with this? Yet no murmur escapes him—no passion ruffles his composure—no resentment flashes from his meek and supplicating eye—no accent of wrath or threatening comes from his oppressed and dying bosom; but even in the last mo-

ment of mortal agony, he lifts his compassionate voice in a prayer of mercy—'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!' In the hour of suffering and despair, reflect upon this scene; try if you cannot catch something of the spirit of your master, and bear your trial like him.

Perhaps you have afflictions of another kind. Calamity and death visit your dwelling, and the lights in which you rejoice are quenched by your side. Your friends are removed, your hopes are destroyed, and you sit in thick darkness, desponding and alone. Here, too, the example of Jesus may cheer and sustain you. Look therefore to him. Call to mind the instructions which he, the author and finisher of your faith, has given, concerning the government of your Father, and the purposes of his providence. Call to mind also the day when he bore the calamities which God had appointed him; when he was emphatically 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;' when he might have cried to you and said, 'Come and see, all ye that pass by, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.' Yet you see him, not giving way to the grief, not overcome by the sorrow; but struggling against it; looking up to God with serene and holy trust; casting his spirit on his Father with unrepining and tranquil submission:—'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' This is no example of unfeeling composure, of Stoical insensibility, of unnatural fortitude. Jesus struggled—even to an agony—that he might attain it. Go, heart-broken mourner, and do likewise. Go, as he did, and pray—not once, but twice and thrice; and God will answer you too, by 'an angel from heaven to strengthen you'—not indeed in a visible form, but in an inward peace. It is no sin to mourn and weep. Jesus wept. The sin lies in refusing to look for comfort, in obstinately murmuring against the hand of God, in complaining of his severity. Jesus even prayed that 'the cup might pass from him.' But not repiningly, not rebelliously. He added, with filial submission, 'Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.' Brethren, this example is of infinite worth to us. Dwell

upon it in the day of your sorrow. Imitate it in the hour of your trouble. You will not fail to attain something of the peace which the Saviour promised to his followers, and which God gives to all those, 'whose hearts are stayed on him, and who trust in him.'

In these various ways may the contemplation of our Lord's example help to guide and support us in the weary pilgrimage of life. Through its vicissitudes of joy and sorrow, duty and suffering, perplexity and fear, it may keep our hearts equal and our faith firm. At its close, it may deliver us from fear, and make us more than conquerors through him that hath loved us. And in heaven—it may have helped to prepare us for the peace of that holy rest, which remains for the people of God.

Blessed be God, who hath given us such a leader! Happy, thrice happy we, if we be enabled successfully to follow him!

NOTE REFERRED TO ON PAGE 118.

It has been objected to the reasoning on pages 118, 119, that it is inconclusive, because it keeps too much out of sight the fact, that it is the entire character of the Deity, and not any one portion of it, which constitutes him the object of worship. The fact is undoubtedly so, and therefore the statements in this passage are, perhaps, too broad and unqualified; yet I think that they will not be found essentially incorrect by those who will give a careful attention to the whole course and bearing of the remarks. The argument will be perceived to be this: The honors rendered to the Father are grounded on his *character*, and on the *relations* which he sustains to his creatures. By his character I understand his *moral attributes*, while these relations grow out of his *natural* attributes. It is the former, principally, as I say in the discourse, (p. 118.) on account of which worship is rendered; although at the same time (p. 117.) the latter are essential to his very existence as God;—and—it should have been expressed as well as implied,—his *relation* to us is founded on them.

How then is this statement applied to the Son? We are in like manner to honor him on account of his *character* and of the *relations* he sustains toward us;—relations, founded, not as those of God, on his *natural attributes* but on the *appointment* of the Father: as is explained at length on pages 119, 120. So that even if it were true that the natural perfections of God are in every respect an equal ground of divine honors with the moral, yet the conclusion respecting the honors due to our Saviour remains the same;—his relations to us being grounded, not, like those of God, on the perfections of his nature, but on the appointment of his Father.

Or if it be said that these relations of God spring in part also from his moral perfections; still the conclusion is the same, for still the relations and offices of Jesus spring from the appointment of God.

BT 201 .W31
Discourses on the offices and
Stanford University Libraries
3 6105 041 255 733

BT
201
.W31

Lancaster Town Library

The library is open every afternoon, except Sunday, from 2 until 5, and on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday evenings from 7 to 9.

All books, except new fiction, may be kept three

Stanford University Libraries
Stanford, California

Return this book on or before date due.